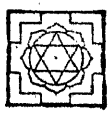
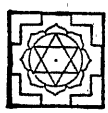
RĀMĀNUJA ON THE YOGA

DR. ROBERT C. LESTER
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CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION ix

PART I: KNOWLEDGE OF BRAHMAN

CHAPTER

I. Brahman, Individual Soul, and Material Universe . 3
II. The Source of Knowledge of Brahman . . 10
III. The Nature of Knowledge of Brahman . . 17
IV. The Relationship between Knowledge of Brahman and Ritual Acts 35

PART II: THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

I. Introductory Outline 49
II. Right Knowledge and the Spiritual Qualities . 64
III. Karmayoga 74
IV. Bhaktiyoga 100
Summary and Conclusion 133
Appendix I: Non-meditative forms of Bhakti . . 143
Appendix II: Rāmānuja and Prapatti . . . 150
Bibliography 183

INTRODUCTION

Rāmānuja (*c.* 1017-1137 A.D.) is one of the key figures in the systematic development of Hindu theism. As the chief exponent of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta he stands as Bhāṣyakāra[1] to South Indian Śrīvaiṣṇavism. Though less well known than Śaṃkara (*c.* 800 A.D.), chief exponent of the Advaita Vedānta and Rāmānuja's primary object of criticism, Rāmānuja is, in perspective, equally important to Hindu thought and life-style. His principal contribution lies in the establishment, on the basis of the Vedānta-texts, of the ultimate reality as a Supreme Person possessed of all auspicious attributes, with the individual souls, by essential nature, standing in a relationship of dependency upon this Lord, as body to soul.[2] The common man's religious experience had spoken of such a Lord and soul long before Rāmānuja (witness such as the Vaiṣṇavite Āḻvārs and the Śaivite Nāyanmārs), but he set this forth systematically, grounded on the eternal truth embodied in the Veda-s, i.e. the Vedānta.

[1] lit., 'maker of the commentary' on the *Brahma-sūtra-s*; this designates Rāmānuja as the foundational thinker of the school or *darśana*.

[2] The relationship between soul and Lord is *śeṣaśeṣibhāva* and *śarīraśarīribhāva*.

Rāmānuja is a Vedāntin—he writes in Sanskrit and his primary reference is to the Veda-s, most especially, the Upaniṣad-s. Beyond these, he takes the *Bhagavadgītā* as a basic source of inspiration. His major writings and the sources for this study are *Śārīraka-mīmāṃsābhāṣya* or *Śrībhāṣya*, *Vedārthasaṃgraha* and *Gītābhāṣya*. The first of these is a commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra-s* of Bādarāyaṇa, which *sūtra-s* purport to summarize the teachings of the Vedānta with regard to Brahman. The second is a 'summary' or 'drawing together of the meaning of the Veda-s' (in this case, the Vedānta). The third is a commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*. Six other writings are attributed to Rāmānuja's hand: the *Vedāntasāra* and *Vedāntadīpa*, shorter versions of the *Śrībhāṣya*, the former giving the gist of Rāmānuja's *siddhānta* (established doctrine) and the major scriptural support for this doctrine, the latter summarizing the *siddhānta* and argument without scriptural support; the *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, *Śrīraṅgagadya* and *Śrīvaikuṇṭhagadya*, three short devotional outpourings; and the *Nityagrantha*, a brief description of daily worship for the Śrīvaiṣṇava. These latter six writings do not add anything to the exposition of Yoga which is found in the former three.

I have taken up the study of Rāmānuja's Yoga for two reasons: first, to gain a clearer understanding of Rāmānuja's *practicum* for *mokṣa* (*mokṣopāya*) and therethrough to speak to some questions concerning his contribution to the development of the Śrīvaiṣṇava-*saṃpradāya*; and second, by reference to Rāmānuja,

to shed light on an issue of comparative religion—the relationship between yogic practice and world-view.

Rāmānuja's philosophy in general and in particular his view of the nature of the three Realities (*tattva-traya*)—the Lord (*Īśvara*), the individual soul (*cit*) and the material universe (*acit*)—have been dealt with extensively by several authors. Comparatively, very little attention has been given to his *mokṣopāya* (or *hita*) and much of what has been written is, in one of two directions, misleading.

On the one hand, some interpreters of Rāmānuja attribute to him what is developed only by later Śrī-vaiṣṇava *ācārya-s*. Specifically, they say that he taught *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati* (resorting to or taking refuge at the feet of the Lord) as the sole, sufficient *mokṣopāya*. Related thereto, they see him as one who opened the way to *mokṣa* for all persons, irrespective of caste and as one who worked life-long to enhance the status and procedures of temple worship. Expositing Rāmānuja in this way, they see him as inspired more by the hymns of the Āḻvār-s and the Pāñcarātra Āgama-s than by the Vedānta-texts.

On the other hand, there are those who, while recognizing that Rāmānuja's *practicum* is a compound of *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti*, do not give sufficient notice to the innovating strictures which Ramanuja's uncompromising theism places upon Yoga in general and Jñāna-yoga in particular. The former interpreters take him as too radically departing from tradition, the latter see him as too simply adhering to tradition.

Rāmānuja is properly noted for strongly advocating *bhakti* in relationship with the Supreme *Person*, rather than, what he calls, the dry, simple knowledge (*jñāna*) of attributeless consciousness, advocated by Advaita Vedānta. However, his chief texts are taken from the Upaniṣad-s and therein he understands the *mokṣopāya* to be *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* (or, *upāsana*), study, reflection and meditation, supported by daily and special (*nitya* and *naimittika*) *karman-s*. His *bhakti* is knowledge (*jñāna*) which has reached the form of devotion (*bhaktirūpāpannajñānam*) by steady remembrance (*dhruvānusmṛti*), 'uninterrupted like the flow of oil'. In comparison to later *ācārya-s* of the Śrīvaiṣṇava-*saṃpradāya*, he is quite conservative in detailing this *upāya*, holding to the traditional requirements of *varṇāśramadharma*, and excluding all but members of the twice-born *varṇa-s* by the fact that they alone are permitted to study the Veda.

There are five matters which centrally characterize the Śrīvaiṣṇava-*saṃpradāya* from the thirteenth century to the present time: (1) *prapatti* as *upāya*; (2) secret teachings (*rahasya-s*) regarding three *mantra-s*: the *Aṣṭākṣara*, the *Dvayam* and the *carama śloka*;[1] (3) Śrī or Lakṣmī as *puruṣakāra* or mediatrix between the soul

[1] *Aṣṭākṣara* (eight-syllabled) *mantra*: *Om namo nārāyaṇāya.*
Dvayam (twofold) *mantra*: *Śrīman nārāyaṇa caranau śaraṇaṃ prapadye;*
Śrimate nārāyaṇāya namaḥ.
carama śloka (the last word): *Bhagavadgītā*, 18. 66:
sarvadharmān parityajya, mām ekaṃ śaraṇaṃ vraja |
ahaṃ tvā sarvapāpebhyo, mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ ||

and the Lord; (4) image-worship in the temple; and (5) appeal to the authority of the Pāñcarātra Āgama-s and the hymns of the Āḻvār-s (*Nālāyira divya prabandham*). None of these five holds significance for Rāmānuja. He employs the term *prapatti*, even apart from where it occurs in the text upon which he is commenting (such as in the *Bhagavadgītā*), but he uses it sparingly and either in the broad sense of 'turning towards the Lord in order to undertake Bhaktiyoga', i.e. giving all of one's attention to the Lord; or, simply, as the equivalent of meditation (*upāsana*).[1] Intent upon establishing traditional dhārmic and meditative patterns on a solidly theistic base, Rāmānuja emphasizes the necessity of divine grace, but grace is not utterly 'free'; it comes to those who are 'immeasureably dear to the Lord by reason of their devotion (*bhakti*)'. Later Śrīvaiṣṇavism takes *Bhagavadgītā*, 18. 66 as the final word (*carama śloka*) on this matter, namely, that releasing grace comes to those who simply fall at the Lord's feet negating themselves and their ability to follow a means (*upāya*). Rāmānuja's commentary on *Gītā* 18. 66 will not bear this interpretation.[2] The *Śaraṇāgatigadya* records the author's personal act of *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati*. However, a comparison of the content, style and language of the *Gadya* with the *Śrībhāṣya*, *Vedārtha-saṃgraha* and *Gītābhāṣya* and an examination of the writings of those who immediately followed Rāmānuja show that Rāmānuja could not have authored this work.[3]

[1, 2, 3] see Appendix for details.

Rāmānuja makes no reference to or inference of *rahasya-s* or the three *mantra-s*. He mentions Śrī in reference to the Lord, but gives no hint that She has any special role as mediatrix between the soul and the Lord. There is reference to temple-worship in a few passages of Rāmānuja's *Gītābhāṣya*, but reference only, without elaboration, and no significant place is given to such worship in the *mokṣopāya*.[1] The doctrine of *ārcāvatāra* (manifestation of the Lord in the form of icons) is special to the Pāñcarātra system. Rāmānuja speaks of the Pāñcarātra in one place only, where it is taken up by the *Brahma-sūtra-s*[2]. There, following his *paramaguru*, Yāmuna, he argues for the authority of the Pāñcarātra, but in listing the special doctrines of this system, he makes no mention of *ārcāvatāra*, and nowhere does he appeal to the Pāñcarātra Āgama-s in support of his own system. Rāmānuja makes no mention of the Āḻvār-s, nor does it appear that he derived inspiration from their hymns.

Turning to the second category of interpreters of Rāmānuja's *mokṣopāya*, we turn as well to the second reason for my interest in Rāmānuja's Yoga. Rāmānuja prescribes meditation (*upāsana* or *dhyāna*) as central to the *practicum* for *mokṣa*. In so doing, he cannot avoid consideration of classical formulations of the Yoga such as that of Patañjali; yet, neither can he uncritically subscribe to disciplines forged on the ground of atheistic or monistic metaphysics. This is the point at which

[1] see Appendix for discussion of this matter.
[2] *Sūtra-s* 2. 2. 42-5.

interpretations of Rāmānuja's *mokṣopāya* as simply Karmayoga, Jñānayoga, Bhaktiyoga, without reference to Rāmānuja's special concerns, fail to do justice to the matter. It is also a point of contemporary interest in comparative religion.

At a time when most Indian Hindus pursue easier means to peace of mind and ultimate felicity, large numbers of Americans and Europeans are avidly taking up the practice of one or another of the varieties of the classic yoga—Haṭhayoga, Rājayoga, Integral Yoga, Kuṇḍalinī-yoga—basically reliant on Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtra-s*. Americans can select from numerous texts on the subject at any corner drugstore, or follow the Guru by means of television.

The several masters who have brought Yoga to the West offer it as a discipline for all persons, irrespective of their philosophy of life. They have strongly implied, if not explicitly stated, that yoga-practice is neutral as to world-view or basic values concerning human nature and destiny. Yet, even a cursory study of the classical texts on yoga will show that the discipline is rooted in and consistently expressive of a particular point of view. A deeper study reveals that the practice of yoga, even apart from an explicit world-view, inculcates in the practitioner a particular way of looking at himself and the world. All this is to say that yoga is, from beginning to end, a spiritual discipline, a total conditioning. If it did not condition the practitioner at a primary level to a particular way of thinking and feeling, it could not accomplish its end.

Patañjali defines the yoga as 'the suppression of states of consciousness' (*yogaḥ cittavṛttinirodhaḥ*). Mircea Eliade, who has made a deep study of the philosophy and psychology of Patañjali's Yoga, generalizes as follows:

> The purpose of Patañjali's Yoga, then, is to abolish the first two categories of experiences ['errors and illusions' and 'the sum total of normal psychological experiences'] and to replace them by an 'experience' that is ecstatic, supersensory, and extrarational... Yoga undertakes to destroy the different groups, species, and varieties of 'states of consciousness' (*cittavṛtti*) one after the other.[1]

This Yoga has eight members or stages, briefly: *Yama*, moral restraints such as non-injury (of living beings), truthfulness, non-stealing, sexual abstinence, and non-avarice; *niyama*, disciplines such as external and internal cleanliness or purity, serenity, asceticism, study (of Yoga philosophy) and contemplation of the Lord; *āsana*, seating; *prāṇayāma*, breath control; *pratyāhāra*, withdrawal of the sense-organs from objects of sense; *dhāraṇā*, concentration; *dhyāna*, meditation; and *samādhi*, an objectless state—a state beyond normal consciousness, a state in which the self or spirit (*puruṣa*) is realized, completely isolated from matter (*prakṛti*).

[1] Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1958, p. 37.

Patañjali offers Yoga as a complete world-view or philosophy, appropriating the metaphysics of Sāṃkhya. In its classical form, Sāṃkhya is atheistic, admitting two equally real principles: soul (*puruṣa*) and matter (*prakṛti*); souls are many, impassive and have the essential nature of pure consciousness; matter is gross, but dynamic and creative, having within it the principle of the evolution and ordering of the material universe. Patañjali goes beyond the Sāṃkhya in affirming the existence of a Lord (Īśvara); but the role of this Lord is relatively minor. He is just another *puruṣa*, albeit one that is free from entanglement with matter—He has no cosmic power such as is involved in the manifestation, ordering, etc. of the universe; this is the province of *prakṛti* itself. He is the primary Guru. Devotion to Īśvara is an aid to attaining *samādhi*, but not because of any power inherent in Īśvara Himself; rather, because the expression of devotion to a god is a psychological aid:

> The role of God in man's acquisition of freedom is of no importance; for the cosmic substance itself undertakes to deliver the many 'selves' (*puruṣa*) entangled in the illusory meshes of existence.
>
> Although it was Patañjali who introduced this new and (when all is said and done) perfectly useless element of Īśvara into the dialectics of the Sāṃkhya soteriological doctrine, he does not give Īśvara the significance that late commentators will accord to him. What is of

> first importance in the *Yoga-sūtra-s* is technique —in other words, the yogin's will and capacity for self-mastery and concentration. Why, then, did Patañjali nevertheless feel the need to introduce Īśvara? Because Īśvara corresponded to an experiential reality: Īśvara can, in fact, bring about *samādhi*, on condition that the yogin practise *īśvarapraṇidhāna*—that is, devotion to Īśvara . . . . All in all, Īśvara is only an archetype of the yogin—a macroyogin; . . .[1]

The goal of Patañjali's Yoga is self-realization, a state of the complete isolation (*kaivalya*) of *puruṣa* from matter (*prakṛti*).

The Pātañjala Yoga is also employed in the context of Advaita Vedānta. The Advaita affirms that reality is one, pure, attributeless consciousness. It denies ultimate reality to a personal God (*saguṇa brahman*) and to the material universe. Spirit or Self (*ātman*, rather than *puruṣa*) is one, universal, impersonal. Through Yoga the Advaitin claims to experience this absolute, attributeless oneness. While the two schools of thought (the Yoga and the Advaita Vedānta) differ in metaphysical viewpoint, the *samādhi* of the two is much the same. The Advaitin also speaks of 'self-realization' and the state of self-realization is an objectless extra-rational state.

In large terms, the aim of Patañjali's Yoga is to eradicate human suffering, at first by radically altering

[1] ibid., pp. 74-5.

the psycho-physical attitude and finally by completely transcending mind-body-conditioned consciousness. Patañjali assumes the existence of soul or spirit and that as utterly distinct and separate from body. He maintains that normal consciousness is deceptive and detrimental to spritual welfare. He teaches an ethic of withdrawal, passivity and isolation and escape from personal involvement in the world conditioned by time and space. His system therefore finds no need of a personal supreme Being.

In the light of these facts, there must be serious question as to the practice of Patañjali's Yoga in a theistic context—a context affirming the ultimate reality of the material universe and the primacy of personal relationships in the human search for meaning. Rāmānuja holds these tenets. He also, nonetheless, offers Yoga as the *mokṣopāya*. Thus, the question is, 'Can a theist practise Yoga without compromising his theistic world-view?' Where better to seek an answer than within the Hindu tradition itself?

PART I

KNOWLEDGE OF BRAHMAN

CHAPTER I

BRAHMAN, INDIVIDUAL SOUL, AND MATERIAL UNIVERSE

THE philosophical position of Rāmānuja is, strictly speaking, one of monism. He agrees with the Advaitin that scripture teaches the non-twoness (Advaita) of reality. But, he denies the Advaitin's conclusion that this oneness is attributeless, pure being or consciousness and that plurality with regard to soul and material world is falsely imposed on this one Being due to ignorance.[1] Scripture speaks of both oneness and plurality with regard to the real (*tattva*) and reconciles the two in the affirmation of the 'oneness of that which has attributes.' (*viśiṣṭādvaita*).[2]

Brahman, the One, is substance and attributes—soul and body; and, while substance and attribute—soul and body—are inseparable, they are clearly distinct. Brahman is material cause as well as efficient cause[3]—individual souls and the material universe

[1] For Rāmānuja's statement of the Advaitin's position see his *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1, *laghu pūrvapakṣa*, Thibaut, p. 8 f.

[2] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1, Thibaut, pp. 138-45.

[3] See *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 4. 1f., Thibaut, p. 354f.; 1. 4. 26-7, Thibaut, p. 402f.

constitute His body (*śarīra*)[1]—they are parts of Brahman (*brahmāṃśa*)[2]; yet, the Ensouler and the ensouled are distinct. Brahman as substance or soul is distinct from Brhaman as manifested attributes or body—in some of Rāmānuja's statements quite radically distinct:

> We know from Scripture that there is a Supreme Person whose nature is absolute bliss and goodness; who is fundamentally antagonistic to all evil; who is the cause of the origination, sustentation, and dissolution of the world; who differs in nature from all other beings, who is all-knowing, who by his mere thought and will accomplishes all his purposes; who is an ocean of kindness as it were for all who depend on him; who is all-merciful; who is immeasurably raised above all possibility of any one being equal or superior to him; whose name is the *highest Brahman*.[3]

Further, just as the One is characterized by attributes, so also the distinct entities within the One are differenced—that is, within the One are entities which are themselves substance and attribute. Brahman as substance or Soul is not purely being, attributeless

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 2. 1. 9—*sarvaṃ cetanācetanaṃ tasya śarīram*—Brahman is one substance distinguished by two modes—*prakāradvayaviśiṣṭa-ekavastu*, 1. 1. 1, text p. 96. See also 2. 1. 8.

[2] ibid., 2. 3. 42.

[3] ibid., 4. 4. 22, Thibaut, p. 770; see also *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 13 f., Thibaut, p. 209f.

consciousness; on the contrary, He is possessed of all auspicious qualities; He is the Supreme *Person*:

> *nikhilajagad-udbhavasthiti-pralaya-līlāśeṣadoṣa-pratyanīka - kalyāṇaikasvarūpa - svābhāvikānavadhikātiśaya - jñānabalaiśvarya-vīryaśakti - tejaḥprabhṛti-samastakalyāṇa-guṇagaṇa-mahārṇava-parabrahmaśabdābhidheya - parama-puruṣa. . .*
>
> . . . the Supreme Person whose sport is the origination, preservation and dissolution of the entire universe, whose essential nature is free from any trace of imperfection and is auspicious, who is a great ocean of all auspicious qualities beginning with unlimited and pre-eminent knowledge, strength, glory, manly energy, power, and lustre, which are natural to Him (*svābhāvika*) and who is called the highest Brahman.[1]

He is 'abolute bliss and goodness', 'an ocean of kindness', 'all merciful'.[2]

Distinct from Brahman and from matter (*prakṛti*) are *numerous*, *individual* souls[3], substantial or permanent 'I's' possessing the capacity to know themselves, the material world and Brahman. The Advaitin holds that all *ātman* is one, pure, attributeless knowledge or

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 18. 73; see also *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 12.

[2] *Śrībhāṣya*, 4. 4. 22, Thibaut, p. 770.

[3] ibid., 2. 3. 43: *īśvarābhedasyātmanāṃ bahutvanityatvayoścābhidhīyamānatvāt*; see also *Śrībhāṣya*, 2. 3. 48: *anyonyabheda*; 2. 3. 42: *jīvabrahmaṇorbhedaḥ*; *Gītābhāṣya*, 2. 12; 2. 18.

consciousness (*saṃvit*)—that 'I-ness' (*ahaṃtva*) is attributed to *ātman* due to ignorance and ceases to exist in the state of release.[1] For Rāmānuja, 'I-ness' is the substance of *ātman*; knowledge or consciousness, its attribute or chief characteristic. The *ātman* is an individual 'knower' (*jñātṛ*), a conscious subject, and persists as such even in the state of release.[2] Rāmānuja emphasizes this point:

> [The Advaitin's position]... amounts to the doctrine—only expressed in somewhat different words—that final release is the annihilation of the self... A man... suffering pain,... naturally begins to reflect how he may once for all free himself from all these manifold afflictions and enjoy a state of untroubled ease; the desire of final release thus having arisen in him he at once sets to work to accomplish it. If... he were to realize that the effect of such activity would be the loss of personal existence, he surely would turn away as soon as somebody began to tell him about 'release'. And the result of this would be that, in the absence of willing and qualified pupils, the whole scriptural teaching as to final release would lose its authoritative character.[3]

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1, Great *pūrvapakṣa*, Thibaut, pp. 36-8.

[2] ibid., 1. 1. 1, Great *siddhānta*, Thibaut, p. 56f; see also 2. 3. 19-31.

[3] ibid., 1. 1. 1, Thibaut, p. 70.

A 'body' is, 'any substance which a sentient soul is capable of completely controlling and supporting for its own purposes, and which stands to the soul in an entirely subordinate relation'.[1] Individual souls (together with *prakṛti*) constitute the *body* of Brahman and as such are related to Him in accordance with this definition—they are related to Him as *śeṣa*, 'that which exists for fulfilling the purposes of another', to *śeṣin*, 'that for whose purposes all other things exist'.[2] They are dependent upon Brahman for their essential nature, existence and activity:[3]

> *brahmasṛjyatva-tanniyāmyatva-taccharīratva-taccheṣatvatadādhāratva-tatpālyatva-tatsaṃhāryatva. . .*[4]
>
> [The soul]. . . is created by Brahman, ruled by Him, constitutes His body, is *śeṣa* to Him, abides in Him, is maintained by Him, is withdrawn by Him. . .

Brahman binds and releases souls according to His pleasure:

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 2. 1. 9, Thibaut, p. 424—*yasya cetanasya yaddravyaṃ sarvātmanā svārthe niyantuṃ dhārayituṃ ca śakyaṃ taccheṣataikasvarūpaṃ ca*—

[2] See Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, paragraphs 80, 122 and 143.

[3] *svarūpa, sthiti, pravṛtti—Gītābhāṣya*, 7. 19.

[4] *Śrībhāṣya*, 2. 3. 42; 'creation' is to be taken in the sense of 'manifestation'; Brahman emits or manifests (*sṛj*) the individual soul and in the dissolution He absorbs or withdraws (*saṃhṛ*) it.

> *tadupāsakatva-tatprasādalabhya-dharmārthakāma-mokṣarūpa-puruṣārtha-bhāktvādaya. . .*[1]
>
> [The soul]. . . is His devotee (meditator), partakes of the goals of man of the form of *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* by His grace. . .

Yet, Brahman is not capricious—He binds and releases in accordance with the souls' acts and these acts are willed by the souls themselves. Aware that a *śeṣa-śeṣin* relationship between the individual souls and the Supreme Person suggests complete determination of the former by the latter, Rāmānuja poses the question, 'Does the soul act "by its own will" (*svātantryeṇa*) or is it "dependent on the Supreme Soul" (*paramātmāyattam*)?'[2] He notes that, if it is completely dependent on the Supreme, then scriptural injunctions and prohibitions have no meaning; yet, that scripture teaches that the Supreme is the cause (*hetu*) of the activity of the soul.[3] The key word in reconciling this difficulty is *anumati*, 'permission' or 'consent'—the Supreme Soul is the Inner Ruler (*antaryāmin*) in the sense that He stands within the individual soul as the Permitter or Consenter (*anumantṛ*):

> The inwardly ruling highest Self promotes action in so far as it regards in the case of any action the volitional effort[4] made by the individual soul,

[1] ibid., 2. 3. 42; see also 3. 2. 37-40.
[2] ibid., 2. 3. 40.
[3] ibid., 2. 3. 40.
[4] *prayatna* or *udyoga*—'effort, exertion, active preparation'.

> and then aids that effort by granting its favour or permission (*anumati*); action is not possible without permission on the part of the highest Self. In this way... injunctions and prohibitions are not devoid of meaning... the Lord, wishing to do a favour to those who are resolved on acting so as fully to please the highest Person, engenders in their minds a tendency towards highly virtuous actions, such as are means to attain to him; while on the other hand, in order to punish those who are resolved on lines of action altogether displeasing to him, he engenders in their minds a delight in such actions as have a downward tendency and are obstacles in the way of the attainment of the Lord.[1]

The point is illustrated by the case of joint owners of property—one, desiring to transfer the property to a third person, must get the permission of the other, but the actual act of transfer is his own.

In contemporary Western terminology, Rāmānuja affirms an 'I' and a 'Thou', a 'Thou' who is personal and an 'I' which has the capacity to know the 'Thou.' He further affirms that the 'I' is dependent upon the 'Thou', that it owes the 'Thou' worship or devotion by essential nature, that it is free to offer or withhold such worship, and that the 'Thou' will reward those 'I's' who are true to their essential nature.

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 2. 3. 41, Thibaut, p. 558.

CHAPTER II

THE SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE OF BRAHMAN

FOR Rāmānuja, the given basis for all theological affirmation is scripture. Scripture is of two kinds: śruti, 'that which was heard or communicated',[1] i.e. that which was heard by certain sages of old and verbally communicated, without flaw, from pupil to pupil, generation to generation;[2] and Smṛti, 'that which is remembered',[3] i.e. that which is remembered by human teachers and written down, i.e. the whole body of sacred tradition. The Veda-s alone are Śruti. Within this category, Rāmānuja lays emphasis on the Vedānta or Upaniṣad-s. Smṛti includes the Dharmaśāstra-s, epics and Purāṇa-s. Here, Rāmānuja places by far the greatest emphasis on the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*.[4] The basis of the authority of Śruti and Smṛti

[1] Monier-Williams, *A Sanskṛit-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956) p. 1101.

[2] *Śrībhāṣya*, 2. 2. 3, Thibaut, p. 487.

[3] Monier-Williams, op. cit., p. 1272.

[4] Thibaut's index shows that the *Viṣṇu purāṇa* is the only Purāṇa quoted in the *Śrībhāṣya*. Van Buitenen's index shows the same for the *Gītābhāṣya*. Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., pp. 34-6, points out that *Viṣṇupurāṇa* is more important than the *Bhagavadgītā* in the *Vedārthasaṃgraha*.

is implicit in the terms themselves. Śruti is preter-human[1] and eternal:

> There where the word-order in speaking derives from human cognition we speak of human language. But there where the word-order in speaking always derives from the mental impression left by the previous word-order in an endless retrogressive chain we call them preter-human and we say that the Veda-s are preter-human. That which makes the Veda-s preter-human and eternal is that it is spoken in exactly the same precise order that has been remembered by the mental impressions left by previous order in an endless retrogressive chain.[2]

It is the teaching or command of the Lord (Brahman): *vedākhyaṃ madanuśāsanam.*[3] Smṛti is authoritative in so far as it exposits Śruti:

> Since the Veda-s are endless and difficult to understand, the great *ṛṣi-s* have been ordered by the Supreme Person to transmit the sense of the Veda in every age in order to help all the worlds, and they have composed the Dharmaśāstra-s, epics, and Purāṇa-s. . .[4]

but, only in so far as it exposits Śruti:

[1] *apauruṣeya*—I borrow the English from Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., p. 294.

[2] Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., 139, pp. 293-4; see also 42; *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 3. 28-9 and 2. 2. 43.

[3] *Gītābhāṣya*, 16. 23—*mad*='me'=Kṛṣṇa, Brahman, Supreme Person. See also 16. 24 and *Śrībhāṣya*, 2. 2. 3.

[4] Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., p. 294.

> But how can it be maintained at all that Scripture does not set forth a certain view because thereby it would enter into conflict with Smṛti? For that Smṛti if contradicted by Scripture is to be held of no account, is already settled in the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā.[1]

According to the schools of Vedānta,[2] scripture affirms that embodied soul (*jīvātman*) is bound in an endless cycle of rebirth (*saṃsāra*) due to ignorance (*avidyā*) and gets release (*mokṣa*) only through knowledge of Brahman (*brahmavidyā*).[3] The questions to be answered are:

1. What is the source of knowledge of Brahman?
2. What is the nature of knowledge of Brahman?
3. What is the nature of ignorance?

Rāmānuja recognizes three valid sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa-s*): perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*) and scripture (*śabda*)[4]; but scripture is the sole source of the knowledge of Brahman:

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 2. 1. 1, Thibaut, p. 408; Pūrva Mīmāṃsā refers to interpretation of Vedic ritual and text; Uttara Mīmāṃsā refers to interpretation of the nature and knowledge of Brahman.

[2] Those schools of thought which rely on the Upaniṣad-s as their primary scriptural texts.

[3] For instance: *brahmavidāpnoti param—Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2. 1. 1; *na punarmṛtyave tadekaṃ paśyati—Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 7. 26. 2 (?); *tameva viditvātimṛtyumeti—Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6. 15; *tamevaṃ vidvānamṛta iha bhavati nānyaḥ panthā ayanāya vidyate—Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, 3. 12 (The Sanskrit is taken from Rāmānuja).

[4] literally, 'sound, voice'—in a specialized sense it is 'verbal communication', and, under this heading, scripture is the most important.

. . . Brahman, being raised above all contact with the senses, is not an object of perception and the other means of proof, but is to be known through Scripture only;. . . But, our opponent points out, Scripture cannot be the source of our knowledge of Brahman, because Brahman is to be known through other means (*pramāṇa*). For it is an acknowledged principle that Scripture has a meaning only with regard to what is not established by other sources of knowledge. —But what, to raise a prima facie counter objection, are those other sources of knowledge? It cannot, in the first place, be Perception (*pratyakṣa*). Perception is twofold, being based either on the sense-organs or on extraordinary concentration of mind (*yoga*). Of Perception of the former kind there are again two sub-species, according as Perception takes place either through the outer sense-organs or the internal organ (*manas*). Now the outer sense-organs are quite unable to give rise to the knowledge of the special object constituted by a supreme Self that is capable of being conscious of and creating the whole aggregate of things. Nor can internal perception give rise to such knowledge; . . . Nor, again perception based on Yoga (*yogajanyam*); for although such perception—which springs from intense imagination—implies a vivid presentation of things, it is, after all, nothing more than a reproduction of objects perceived previously,

> and does not therefore rank as an instrument of knowledge (*prāmāṇyam*); for it has no means of applying itself to objects other than those perceived previously. And if, after all, it does so, it is (not a means of knowledge but) a source of error.[1]

Anumāna is based on sense-perception and one observes no feature of the manifest world which would lead one to infer a supreme Being.[2] Thus, *śabda* is the sole source of knowledge of Brahman.

What is to our interest to note in the above statement is the province which Rāmānuja allows to Yoga. Yogic vision is only a special kind of perception (*pratyakṣa*) and even at that it is not a source of new knowledge (as are other kinds of *pratyakṣa*). Rather than being an instrument of knowledge, Yoga is a kind of memory (*smṛti*), an intensity of imagination (*bhāvanāprakarṣa*), an instrument by which that which has already been perceived is perceived more vividly.[3] In itself, the

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 3, Thibaut, pp. 161-2; see also 1. 2, Thibaut, p. 255f.

[2] Thibaut, p. 162f.; see Dasgupta, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 3, op. cit., and K. C. Varadachari, *Rāmānuja's Theory of Knowledge* (Tirupati, T.T.D. Press, 1956), for a comprehensive treatment of Rāmānuja's epistemology.

[3] As Dasgupta, *Indian Philosophy*, vol. 3, op. cit., p. 214, points out, in *Gītābhāṣya*, 15. 15, Rāmānuja seems to include Yoga among the *pramāṇa-s*. Here he defines knowledge (*jñāna*) as: 'certainty of things arising from sense-perception, inference, scripture and Yoga' (*indriyaliṅgāgamayogajo vastuniścayaḥ*). Since he does not elaborate on the matter, we must take his explicit

fact that Rāmānuja does not recognize yogic perception as a source of new knowledge is not extraordinary. Of the orthodox schools of Hindu thought (including the Yoga school) only the Nyāya recognizes yogic perception as *pramāṇa*. However, the way in which Rāmānuja defines Yoga seems to indicate that in affirming that yogic perception is not *pramāṇa*, he is affirming not only that it is not a source of *new* knowledge, but also that it is not at all a source of knowldge—it is not at all an 'objective' perception. Rather, yogic perception is simply the *mental* (as opposed to *actual*) vision which one has of an object due to intense concentration upon that object—an entirely 'subjective' perception. We shall be able to come to a definite conclusion on this matter at a later point.

Whether or not Rāmānuja understands yogic perception to be purely subjective, his definition of Yoga differs radically from Patañjali's. Patañjali's Yoga aims at the cessation or suppression, the complete transcendence of all states of consciousness (*cittavṛttinirodha*). Patañjali distinguishes two kinds of *samādhi* and several stages within each kind.[1] In 'differentiated' (*saṃprajñāta*) *samādhi* or *samādhi* with support (*sālambana*), there is still consciousness of the object which one has taken in *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna*, but even in its second

statement as of greater force than this passing reference. Perhaps the prominence of the Yoga in the *Bhagavadgītā* led him to such seeming self-contradiction. See also Van Buitenen, *Bhagavadgītā*, op. cit., p. 154.

[1] See Eliade, *Yoga*, op. cit., p. 79f.

stage[1] '. . . memory ceases to function. . . the object is empty of name and meaning. . .'.[2] In undifferentiated (*asaṃprajñāta*) *samādhi* '. . . all " consciousness " as such vanishes, the entire series of mental functions are blocked . . . there is no other trace of the mind [*citta*] save the impressions [*saṃskāra*] left behind. . .'.[3] At the least we can say that the Yoga defined by Rāmānuja above, can encompass only differentiated *samādhi* and that only in part.

[1] *nirvitarka*—see Eliade, *Yoga*, op. cit., p. 81f.
[2] ibid., pp. 81-2.
[3] ibid., p. 80.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE OF BRAHMAN

> We admit that release consists only in the cessation of Nescience (*avidyā*), and that this cessation results entirely from the knowledge of Brahman. But a distinction has here to be made regarding the nature of this knowledge which the Vedānta texts aim at enjoining for the purpose of putting an end to Nescience. Is it merely the knowledge of the sense of sentences which orginates from the sentences? (*vākyād vākyārthajñānamātram*) or is it knowledge in the form of meditation (*upāsanā*) which has the knowledge just referred to as its antecedent (*mūla*)?[1]

The former of these two viewpoints is the one which Rāmānuja attributes to the Advaitin. For the Advaitin, *avidyā* is simply wrong knowledge (*mithyājñāna*). Due to an unexplainable, beginningless ignorance,[2] *Ātman*, which is one (*ātman*=Brahman), mere non-differenced

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1, Small *siddhānta*, Thibaut, pp. 11-12.

[2] *māyā—avidyā* on a cosmic scale. See Dasgupta, Vol. 1, op. cit.

consciousness (*nirviśeṣa-cinmātram*), comes to view existence as plural. It attributes to itself desires, in accordance with its apparent association with this plurality, and sees itself as bound in an endless cylce of birth, old age and death due to the actions (*karman*) it seems to perform in order to satisfy these desires. Thus, bondage is essentially unreal and may be terminated by right knowledge—knowledge that reality is non-dual (*advaita*)—gained from scripture. When the internal organ (*manas*) has been purified, in the course of many births, by the performance of *karman* without desire for its fruit, one becomes capable of 'discrimination of what is eternal and what is non-eternal' (*nityānityavastuvivekaḥ*), 'acquisition of means like restraint of mind and restraint of body' (*śamadamādisādhanasaṃpat*), 'renunciation of the enjoyment of fruit here and in the next world' (*ihāmutraphalabhogavirāgaḥ*), and 'the desire for release (*mumukṣutvam*). From these arises a desire for knowledge (*jijñāsā*). Turning to the scripture, hearing (*śravaṇa*), reflecting (*manana*) and meditating (*nididhyāsana*)[1] on its key texts help one to grasp the sense of these texts, and such knowledge puts an end to *avidyā*.[2] Meditation here means the constant

[1] Based on *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4. 5. 6—*ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ*—'The *ātman* is to be seen, to be heard, to be reflected on, to be meditated on.'

[2] The Advaitin's position is summarized in *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1, Small and Large *pūrvapakṣa*. Rāmānuja sets up this position simply as the *pūrvapakṣa*, literally, 'former view'; but it is essentially Śaṃkara's viewpoint.

holding of the sense of the Vedānta texts before one's mind, so as to dispel all imagination of plurality.[1]

Rāmānuja begins by refuting the Advaitin on his own grounds. He points out that something more than mere knowledge of the sense of texts must be *enjoined*[2] by scripture, since this much is effected without injunction, i.e. grasping the sense of the texts necessarily follows upon having heard and reflected upon them; such does not need to be enjoined. Further,

> . . . if it were true that knowledge arises through the dispelling of the imagination of the plurality, the rise of knowledge would really never be brought about. For the imagination of plurality has through gradual growth in the course of beginningless time acquired an infinite strength, and does not therefore admit of being dispelled by the comparatively weak conception of non-duality.[3]

Even if it be admitted that bondage is unreal, it cannot be sublated by knowledge of the sense of texts. The

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1, Thibaut, p. 15. The text reads: *etadvirodhyanādibhedavāsanānirasanāyāsyaivārthasyānavaratabhāvanā nididhyāsanam*—'Meditation is the constant imagination of the sense of this [text] only, in order to dispel the impression of beginningless plurality which is an obstacle to that [knowledge of the oneness of *ātman*].' *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1, *laghu pūrvapakṣa*, p. 51.

[2] Rāmānuja follows the Mīmāṃsaka view that injunction (*vidhi*) is the principal element in Śruti; see Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., pp. 51 ff. for a discussion of the point.

[3] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1, Thibaut, p. 13.

Advaitin, in seeking to establish that the existence of plurality is an illusion, has employed an analogy of mistaking a rope for a snake. Rāmānuja, speaking in terms of this analogy, says:

> When a man directly conscious of a snake before him is told by a competent by-stander that it is not a snake but merely a rope, his fear is not dispelled by a mere cognition contrary to that of a snake, and due to the information received; but the information brings about the cessation of his fear in that way that it rouses him to an activity aiming at the direct perception, by means of his senses, of what the thing before him really is.[1]

Simply being told that bondage (the snake) is unreal will not effect release--one must directly *experience* the truth and words are not a means of such experience, even in the cases of Vedic words.[2] Nor, can it be said that meditation is helpful in grasping the meaning of the texts; for this leads to a vicious circle—one is to meditate on the sense of the texts in order to grasp the sense of the texts.[3] Rāmānuja concludes his argument along this line with a very significant statement:

> *kiṃca dhyānasya dhyeya-dhyātrādyaneka-prapañcāpekṣatvān - niṣprapañcabrahmātmaikatva - viṣayavākyārthajñānotpattau dṛṣṭadvāreṇa nopayoga iti vākyārthajñāna-*

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 4, Thibaut, pp. 184-5.
[2] ibid., 1. 1. 4, Thibaut, p. 185.
[3] ibid.

mātrād avidyā-nivṛttiṃ vadataḥ śravaṇa-manana-nididhyāsana-vidhīnām ānarthakyameva ।

> Moreover, as meditation presupposes plurality comprising an object of meditation, a meditating subject and so on, it really cannot in any perceptible way be helpful towards the origination of the comprehension of the sense of texts, the object of which is the oneness of a Brahman free from all plurality: he, therefore, who maintains that Nescience (*avidyā*) comes to an end through the mere comprehension of the meaning of texts, really implies that the injunction of hearing, reflection, and meditation is purposeless.[1]

Meditation presupposes plurality and therefore cannot be conducive to the apprehension of reality as absolute oneness. In effect, Rāmānuja here denies that the practice of Yoga can have any significance in the context of a monistic world-view. For the Advaitin, *dhyāna* or *nididhyāsana* signifies Yoga and more specifically the eight-member Yoga of the orthodox Yoga school.[2] The Advaitin does not rely on Yoga as the direct means to that perfect knowledge of oneness which releases—the Vedānta texts alone convey this knowledge.[3] However, he does affirm that yogic

[1] ibid., p. 186.

[2] See *Vedānta-sūtra-s with Śaṃkarācārya's Commentary*, tr. by Thibaut, op. cit., vol. XXXIV, 2. 1. 3, p. 297; and Dasgupta, *Indian Philosophy*, vol. 1, op. cit., p. 490.

[3] *Vedānta-sūtra-s*, Śaṃkara, op.cit., 2. 1. 3, p. 298.

meditation can be helpful toward the apprehension of the meaning of these texts. Rāmānuja denies this—Yoga is based on plurality and (it is to be inferred) in the practice of Yoga one never gets beyond plurality. Therefore, Yoga cannot be conducive to the apprehension of reality as absolute oneness.

Rāmānuja refutes the Advaitin on this point with good reason. He himself affirms that scripture enjoins meditaton and, more specifically, Yoga and that it enjoins it in a context in which it can be ultimately meaningful.

> *ato vākyārtha-jñānād anyadeva dhyānopāsanādi-śabdavācyaṃ jñānaṃ vedānta-vākyair vidhitsitam*\[1]
>
> Therefore, that knowledge which is denoted by words like *dhyāna* and *upāsana* and is enjoined by the Vedānta texts is other than knowledge of the sense of sentences.

In texts such as, 'Having found out the *ātman*, he knows it'[2] and 'Having known it, let him practise meditation'[3], *vijānāti* and *prajñāṃ kurvīta* indicate that meditation alone is enjoined; *anuvidya* and *vijñāya* indicate that knowledge of the sense of texts is prerequisite, but secondary. In *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4. 5. 6, *śrotavya* and *mantavya* are mere *anuvāda*, i.e. explanatory repetition; it is *nididhyāsitavya* part which is enjoined. (There is to be no doubt that derivatives from the

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1, *laghu siddhānta*, p. 52.
[2] *ātmānamanuvidya vijānāti—Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 8. 7. 1.
[3] *vijñāya prajñāṃ kurvīta—Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4. 4. 21.

root *vid* signify the same as *dhyāna* or *upāsana*, since numerous Śruti texts employ the terms synonymously in the same sentence.)[1]

Dhyāna is 'steady remembrance' (*dhruvānusmṛti*), 'a continuity of remembrance uninterrupted like the flow of oil'.[2] 'And that remembrance has a form similar to seeing [vision, direct perception]' (*sā ca smṛti-darśana-samānākārā*).[3] What is meant is that *dhyāna* is focusing the mind intensely and continuously on an object to the end that this object is as vividly perceived before the mind as if it were directly before the eyes. The fact that steady remembrance results, not in actual vision, i.e. direct objective perception, but in that which is *like* or *similar to* actual vision confirms what we found suggested with respect to yogic perception. Rāmānuja does not consistently qualify his statements with regard to the vision which results from steady remembrance, by the use of *samāna*; for instance, in the same context he says:

> *seyaṃ smṛtir darśanarūpā pratipāditā* ।
> *darśana-rūpatā ca pratyakṣatāpattiḥ* ।[4]

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1, small *siddhānta*.

[2] *dhyānaṃ ca tailadhārāvad-avicchinna-smṛti-saṃtāna-rūpam—laghu siddhānta*, p. 53. Rāmānuja's primary scriptural support is *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 7. 26. 2—*dhruvā smṛtiḥ smṛtilambhe sarvagranthīnāṃ vipramokṣaḥ*—'Remembrance is steady—on the attainment of remembrance all the ties are loosened.'

[3] *laghu siddhānta*, p. 53.

[4] ibid.

(Such remembrance has been declared to have the form of seeing; and this form of seeing is characterized by direct perception)

but, that this qualification applies throughout is shown by the fact that:

bhavati ca smṛter bhāvanā-prakarṣād darśana-rūpatā ।[1]

And remembrance has the form of seeing due to intensity of imagination.

This statement not only makes it quite clear that the vision which results from steady remembrance is not actual vision, but also, and by the same phrase—'intensity of imagination' (*bhāvanāprakarṣa*)—identifies *dhyāna* or *smṛti* with the Yoga discussed in chapter II. There we noted that according to Rāmānuja yogic perception arises from 'intensity of imagination' (*bhāvanā-prakarṣa*). In his commentary on a passage from the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, Rāmānuja directly equates *dhyāna* or *smṛti* with Yoga. Noting that the *Muṇḍaka*-text refers to two kinds of knowledge (*jñāna*), one indirect (*parokṣa*) and one direct (*aparokṣa*), both kinds having Brahman as their object—

tatra parokṣaṃ śāstrajanyaṃ jñānam aparoṣkaṃ yoga-janyam tayor brahmaprāpty-upāyabhūtam aparokṣaṃ jñānam . . . tadupāyaścāgama-janyaṃ. . . jñānam. . .

[1] *laghu siddhānta*, p. 53. Vedānta Deśika, *Tattvaṭīkā*, *Śrīmad-Vedāntadeśika-granthamālā*, ed. by Sri P. B. Annangaracharyar (Conjeeveram, 1941) p. 66, says that this statement is only glorification, i.e. arthavāda; since *dhyāna* is *smṛti*, the result can only be *like* actual vision.

[2] *laghu siddhānta*, p. 53.

tatrâparā ṛgvedo yajurveda ityādinā dharma-śāstrāṇītyantena āgamotthaṃ brahmasākṣātkāra-hetubhūtaṃ parokṣajñānam uktam ।

sāṅgasya setihāsa-purāṇasya sadharma-śāstrasya samīmāṃsasya vedasya brahmajñānotpatti-hetutvād 'atha parā yayā tadakṣaramadhigamyate' ityupāsanākhyaṃ brahmasākṣātkāra-lakṣaṇaṃ bhaktirūpāpannaṃ jñānam.[1]

Indirect knowledge is that which arises from scripture, direct is that which arises from Yoga; of the two, direct knowledge is the means by which to obtain Brahman; . . . and the knowledge which arises from scripture is the means to that; . . . that (knowledge) which is stated in the text beginning with, 'The lower is *Ṛgveda, Yajurveda,* etc.', and ending with Dharmaśāstra-s, is the indirect knowledge which arises from scripture and which is the cause of a direct perception of Brahman; for the Veda together with its auxiliaries, the Itihāsa-s, Purāṇa-s, Dharmaśāstra-s and the Mīmāṃsā, is the cause of the origin of the knowledge of Brahman. 'Thus, the higher is that by which the Indestructible is apprehended', refers to the knowledge called *upāsana,* which has reached the form of *bhakti* and which is characterized by a direct perception of Brahman.

[1] *Śrībhāṣya,* 1. 2. 23.

Here *upāsana* which has been stated to be the equivalent of *dhyāna* or *smṛti* is identified with Yoga. And we may now conclusively state the following:

1) that knowledge of Brahman means vivid perception in meditation on Brahman;
2) that meditation (*dhyāna*) signifies Yoga;
3) that the essence of Yoga, by the above fact as well as by explicit definition, is steady remembrance—an intensity of imagination;

and 4) that the vision which results from Yoga is subjective rather than objective—a vivid imagination rather than an actual vision. By means of Yoga the knowledge of Brahman gained from scripture is intensified to the point of a vivid imagination of Brahman.

Also indicated in the above comments on the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* is the fact that Rāmānuja makes one further and most important distinction with respect to knowledge of Brahman—'*upāsana* which has reached the form of *bhakti*'. Obtaining knowledge of Brahman from scripture and meditating on it until it is vividly fixed before the mind's eye is not, in itself, sufficient to effect release—one must be *chosen* by the Lord, the Supreme Person. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2. 23 states:

nāyamātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhyā na bahunā śrutena ।
yamevaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūṃ svām ॥[1]

[1] This is Rāmānuja's *mahāvākya* (chief text) with regard to definition of the Means to Release.

> This *Ātman* cannot be gained by study of the Veda, nor by thought, nor by much hearing; only whom This One chooses, by him, He is obtained; to him this *Ātman* reveals Its own form.

Rāmānuja interprets *pravacana* as *manana*, *medhā* as *nididhyāsana*. Thus, the passage means that Brahman (=*Ātman*) cannot be obtained by reflection or by meditation, i.e. Yoga; only he whom the Supreme Person chooses, obtains Him. However, Rāmānuja does not, therefore, interpret the text to mean that salvation (release) is by grace alone.[1] The Supreme chooses only him who is most beloved (*priyatama*) to Him, and only he to whom the Supreme is immeasurably dear (*niratiśayapriya*) is most beloved to the Supreme.[2] Therefore, meditation (Yoga) must be expressive of, must ripen into devotion toward Brahman. Only the yogin whose devotion to the Supreme Person is so exclusive and constant that his yogic meditation itself becomes extremely dear to him, is chosen by that Person, i.e. is released:

> *sākṣātkāra-rūpā smṛtiḥ smaryamāṇātyartha-priyatvena svayamapy atyarthapriyā yasya sa eva pareṇātmanā varaṇīyo bhavatīti tenaiva labhyate parātmety uktaṃ bhavati | evaṃrūpā dhruvānusmṛtireva bhaktiśabdenābhidhīyate upāsana-paryāyatvād bhaktiśabdasya*|[3]

[1] Śrī-Vaiṣṇava-s of the Southern School also take *Kaṭha* 2.23 as their *mahāvākya*, but interpret it to mean, 'release by grace alone'.

[2] *laghu siddhānta*, p. 53; Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., 144, p. 173.

[3] *Śrībhāṣya*, *laghu siddhānta*, p. 53.

He to whom remembrance, having the form of vivid perception of Brahman, is itself extremely dear by the fact that the object of remembrance (Brahman) is extremely dear, we say he only is chosen by the Highest Self and, as is stated, by him alone is the Highest Self obtained. Steady remembrance which has such a form is designated by the word, *bhakti*, since *bhakti* has the same meaning as *upāsana*.

bhaktirapi niratiśaya-priyānanyaprayojana-sakaletara-vaitṛṣṇyāvaha-jñānaviśeṣa eveti/ tadyukta eva tena pareṇātmanā varaṇīyo bhavatīti tena labhyate/[1]

bhakti is a kind of knowledge which is immeasurably dear, has no other object, and produces indifference to everything else. Only he who has acquired this (*bhakti*) is chosen by the Highest Self; by him He is obtained.

. . . pareṇātmanā varaṇīyatā-hetubhūtaṃ smaryamāṇa-viṣayasyātyartha-priyatvena svayamapy-atyarthapriya-rūpaṃ smṛtisantānam evopāsana-śabdavācyam. . .[2]

A continuity of remembrance which is extremely dear in itself by the fact of the object of remembrance being extremely dear, and which is the cause of being chosen by the Highest Self, is called *upāsana*.

[1] Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., p. 128.

[2] *Gītābhāṣya*, 7, introduction. These three passages together bring out the various nuances of Rāmānuja's idea of *bhakti* and also serve to indicate that Rāmānuja is perfectly consistent, from one writing to another.

The purpose of yogic meditation is to generate devotion. Meditation on Brahman, i.e. steady remembrance of Brahman results in vivid imagination of Brahman, which imagination gives rise to devotion; devotion gives rise to further meditation, meditation to vision, vision to greater devotion, etc. Therefore, the vision which results from Yoga is not and need not be actual vision—the purpose of having such a vision being only to generate devotion.

And, therefore, Yoga is not a once and for all affair. Release is not the result of yogic perception, of 'self-realization' or of 'Brahman-realization'; rather, it is the result of devotion. Yoga must be practised again and again, daily, until the death of the body:

> . . . Scripture declares that meditation has to take place. . . in the whole period from the first effort after meditation up to death. . .[1]
>
> The meaning of Scripture is fulfilled only by repeated acts of knowledge. . . because the teaching of Scripture is conveyed by means of the term 'knowing' (*vedana*), which is synonymous with meditating (*dhyāna*, *upāsana*).[2]
>
> *dhyānaṃ ca cintanam | cintanaṃ ca smṛtisaṃtatirūpam na smṛtimātram*|[3]
>
> *dhyāna* is thinking; and thinking is of the form of continuous remembrance, not mere remembrance.

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 4. 1. 12, Thibaut, p. 721.
[2] ibid., 4. 1. 1, Thibaut, pp. 715-16.
[3] ibid., text, p. 366.

jñānaṃ ca vākyārthajñānād arthāntarabhūtaṃ dhyānopāsanādi-śabdavācyaṃ viśadatama-pratyakṣatāpanna-smṛtirūpaṃ niratiśayapriyam aharahar-abhyāsādheyātiśayam āprayāṇād anuvartamānaṃ mokṣa-sādhanam।[1]

> The knowledge which is the means to release is different from knowledge of the sense of texts, is denoted by such terms as *dhyāna* and *upāsana*, is of the form of remembrance which has reached a state of most vivid perception, is extremely dear, is ever more so by daily pratice, and is pursued until death.

It remains for us to indicate in this chapter that, in spite of the way in which Rāmānuja admits and defines Yoga with respect to his Means to Release, when he speaks of Yoga he has specifically in mind that Yoga systematized by Patañjali for the Yoga school. In the *Śrībhāṣya*, Rāmānuja states his own position in the course of refuting other points of view. After having refuted that which he finds unacceptable in Kapila's Sāṃkhya, he turns to consider the related Yoga school:

> It might appear. . . that the Vedānta should be supported by the Yoga-smṛti, firstly, because the latter admits the existence of a Lord; secondly, because the Vedānta texts mention Yoga as a means to bring about final release; and thirdly, because Hiraṇyagarbha, who proclaimed the Yoga-smṛti, is qualified for the promulgation of all Vedānta texts.—But these arguments refute

[1] ibid., 3. 4. 26, p. 357.

> themselves as follows: In the first place the Yoga holds the *Pradhāna*[1], which is independent of Brahman, to be the general cause, and hence the Lord acknowledged by it is a mere operative cause. In the second place the nature of meditation, in which the Yoga consists, is determined by the nature of the object of meditation, and as of its two objects, namely the soul and the Lord, the former does not have its Self in Brahman, and the latter is neither the cause of the world nor endowed with the other auspicious qualities (which belong to Brahman), the Yoga is not of Vedic character.[2]

Rāmānuja goes on briefly to the effect that Hiraṇyagarbha was only an ordinary embodied soul and therefore, not infallible in his interpretation of the Vedānta texts. This is all that he has to say in the way of direct criticism of the Yoga school. However, in short compass, he has raised the critical questions which confront the theist who is concerned to practise Yoga, namely, the matter of Patañjali's essentially non-theistic world-view and the definition of Yoga-technique in accordance with this view. Rāmānuja rejects the Yoga school's world-view—the individual soul according to this school does not have its being in Brahman, and the Lord is neither Manifester, Preserver, and Withdrawer of the entire universe nor Supreme Person—and,

[1] *Prakṛti.*

[2] *Śrībhāṣya*, 2. 1. 3, Thibaut, pp. 412-13.

therefore, he does not accept the Yoga-technique as it is defined by the Yoga school—'. . . the nature of meditation, in which the Yoga consists, is determined by the nature of the object of meditation. . .'[1].

But this does not mean that Rāmānuja rejects Yoga-technique in its entirety. In seeking to show that the Pañcarātra literature[2] is Vedic and therefore authoritative, he says:

> . . . the Sāṃkhya, the Yoga, the Veda-s, and the Āraṇyaka-s, which are members of one another because they are one in so far as aiming at setting forth one Truth, are together called the Pañcarātra.—The Sāṃkhya explains the twenty-five principles, the Yoga teaches certain practices and means of mental concentration [*yogoktaṃ ca yama-niyamādyātmakaṃ yogam*][3], and the Āraṇyaka-s teach that all the subordinate principles have their true Self in Brahman, that the mental concentration enjoined in the Yoga is a mode of meditation on Brahman [*yogasya ca brahmopāsana-prakāratvam*], and that the rites and works which are set forth in Veda are means to win the favour of Brahman. . . The Śārīraka Śāstra[4]. . . in its criticism on the Yoga. . . merely

[1] ibid.

[2] See Schrader, Friedrich Otto, *Introduction to the Pāñcarātra and the Ahirbudhnya Saṃhitā.* (Adyar Library Series No. 5).

[3] Thibaut's translation is not satisfactory at this point; better, 'and the Yoga (school) states the Yoga, consisting of *yama, niyama,* etc.'.

[4] The *Brahma-sūtras,* upon which Rāmānuja is commenting.

> refutes the view of the Lord being a mere instrumental cause, . . . but it does not reject the Yoga itself. . . The essential points in all these doctrines are to be adopted, not to be rejected absolutely as the teaching of Jina or Sugata is to be rejected.[1]

We note the following points:

1) That all of the elements which are here stated to be legitimate in the Sāṃkhya and the Āraṇyaka-s can be shown to be key doctrines in Rāmānuja's system; and therefore, that element of the Yoga herein mentioned must also be taken as important for Rāmānuja.[2]

2) That *brahmopāsana* of *yogasya ca brahmopāsana-prakāratvam* is a term which Rāmānuja employs again and again to characterize his *mokṣopāya.*

3) That the viewpoint of the Śārīraka Śāstra on Yoga, namely, that it '. . . merely refutes the view of the Lord being a mere instrumental cause, . . . but it does not reject the Yoga itself. . .', is, of course, Rāmānuja's own viewpoint—his interpretation of the *Brahma-sūtra-s.*

4) The *yamaniyamādi* leaves no doubt that this Yoga is the eight-member (*aṣṭāṅga*) technique systematized by Patañjali.

What this means is that the *dhyāna* which Rāmānuja identifies with Yoga is more specifically the seventh

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 2. 2. 43; Thibaut, pp. 530-31.

[2] '. . . The essential points in all these doctrines are to be adopted. . .'

member of Patañjali's Yoga. The fact that, in speaking of the knowledge of Brahman, Rāmānuja takes *dhyāna* as his basic term and defines it in terms of *smṛti*, *upāsana*, *bhakti*, rather than vice-versa, i.e. rather than defining *smṛti*, etc., in terms of *dhyāna*, is further support for this conclusion. Rāmānuja characterizes Yoga by his definition of *dhyāna*, evidently, because he considers *dhyāna* to be the crucial, definitive stage of Yoga. What we expect to find in the course of a detailed analysis of Rāmānuja's Yoga is that he accepts the first six stages of Patañjali's Yoga, radically redefines the seventh (*dhyāna*) as already explained, and completely omits the eighth (*samādhi*). This position reconciles all of Rāmānuja's statements about Yoga which we have noted so far. From the fact that Rāmānuja rejects Patañjali's view of the individual soul and of the Lord (in a word, his view of reality) but accepts (indeed, must accept because the Vedānta-texts prescribe Yoga as the Means to Release) Patañjali's yogic meditation, commenting that the nature of meditation is determined by the nature of its object, it follows that he identifies *dhyāna* with Yoga but defines *dhyāna* as remembrance resulting (not in actual vision) but in vivid imagination the purpose of which is to give rise to devotion (in accordance with its object—the soul as *śeṣa* to Brahman, Brahman as *śeṣin*, Supreme Person); and, it follows that he accepts the first six members of Patañjali's Yoga, but omits the eighth.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE OF BRAHMAN AND RITUAL ACTS

RĀMĀNUJA answers the third question, 'What is the nature of *avidyā*?' in specifying what he considers to be the relationship between meditation and the performance of scripturally prescribed ritual acts (*karman*). Yogic meditation expressive of *bhakti* is not all that is required of one who is desirous of release. Also to be performed are those daily and occasional (*nitya* and *naimittika*) ritual observances (*karman*) prescribed by scripture for one's caste (*varṇa*) and stage of life (*āśrama*). These must be performed simply because they are prescribed in scripture and scripture embodies the command of the Supreme Person; but the primary reason for their performance is that such action is propaedeutic to yogic meditation:

> *yajñadāna-tapaḥprabhṛti vaidikaṃ karma mumukṣuṇā na kadācidapi tyājyam api tvāprayāṇād aharahaḥ kāryameva | kutaḥ? yajñadāna-tapaḥprabhṛtīni varṇāśramasaṃbandhīni karmāṇi manīṣiṇāṃ—mananaśīlānāṃ pāvanāni | mananam—upāsanam | mumukṣūṇāṃ yāvajjīvam upāsanaṃ kurvatām upāsana-niṣpattivirodhiprācīnakarma-vināśanānītyarthaḥ ||*[1]

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 18. 5.

> Vedic *karman*—sacrifice, charity, penance and the rest—is never to be abandoned by the *mumukṣu*, but is to be performed daily until death; why so? Karma-s associated with *varṇa* and *āśrama*—*yajña*, *dāna*, *tapas* and the rest—are purifiers of the wise, i.e. of those whose practice is reflection—reflection (*manana*) is meditation (*upāsana*); they destroy the past karma, which is an obstacle to the accomplishment of meditation, of those who desire release, who engage in meditation throughout their life.

The Advaitin (according to Rāmānuja) admits that the performance of *karman* wihout the desire for fruit and over a period of many births purifies the mind so that there arises in it a desire for knowledge. But, he says, beyond this, karma, which is based on the assumption of the plurality of existence, is not only useless but also essentially opposed to the knowledge of Brahman. He who is desirous of release must abandon all *karman*.[1]

In response to the Advaitin, Rāmānuja admits that scripture enjoins the performance of *karman* in order to give rise to the desire for knowledge. But, he says, since knowledge is of the form of meditation to be practised daily until death, *karman* must likewise be performed daily until death as support for this meditation.[2] *Sūtra* 3. 4. 26 states:

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1; Small *pūrvapakṣa*, Thibaut, p. 8f.
[2] ibid., 1. 1. 1; Small *siddhānta*, Thibaut, p. 16.

> And there is need of all (works), on account of the scriptural statement of sacrifices and the rest; as in the case of the horse.[1]

Rāmānuja comments:

> *yathā gamana-sādhanabhūto 'śvaḥ svaparikrara-bandha-parikarmāpekṣaḥ evaṃ mokṣasādhana-bhūtâpi vidyā nitya-naimittika-karmaparikarāpekṣā* |[2]
>
> As a horse, which is the means of going, requires grooming and the fitting of the saddle, bridle, etc. so meditation, which is the means to release, requires the assistance of *nitya* and *naimittika karman*.

Parikarabandha literally means, 'the binding on of a girdle in order to begin any work'[3]—the performance of karma disciplines or girds-up the mind for meditation.

In the *Śruti*:

> *tametaṃ vedānuvacanena brāhmaṇā vividiṣanti yajñena dānena tapasânāśakena* |[4]
>
> Brāḥmaṇa-s seek to know Him [Brahman] by means of study of the Veda, sacrificè, gifts, austerity and fasting.
>
> 'They seek to know by means of sacrifices' can be said only if sacrifices are understood to be

[1] Thibaut, pp. 698-9.
[2] *Śrībhāṣya*, 3. 4. 26.
[3] Monier-Williams, Sanskṛit Dictionary, op. cit., p. 591.
[4] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4. 4. 22.

> a means through which knowledge is brought about; just as one can say 'he desires to slay with a sword', because the sword is admitted to be an instrument wherewith one can kill.[1]

Knowledge here does not mean simply knowledge of the sense of scriptural texts; rather, it means *meditation* of the kind described above—

> What we have to understand by knowledge in this connexion has been repeatedly explained, namely, a mental energy different in character from the mere cognition of the sense of texts, and more specifically denoted by such terms as *dhyāna* or *upāsana*, i.e. meditation; which is of the nature of remembrance, but in intuitive clearness is not inferior to the clearest presentative thought (*pratyakṣa*); which is unsurpassably dear; which by constant daily practice becomes ever more perfect, and being duly continued up to death, secures final Release.[2]

Knowledge of this kind arises only by the grace of the Supreme Person and His grace is only forthcoming when He is propitiated by the daily performance of *nitya* and *naimittika karman*—

> Such meditation is originated in the mind through the grace of the Supreme Person, who is pleased and conciliated by the different kinds

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 3. 4. 26; Thibaut, p. 699.
[2] ibid.

> of acts of sacrifice and worship duly performed by the devotee day after day.[1]

How is this to be explained?

For Rāmānuja, bondage is real—a distinct individual *ātman* is bound to a real material body, and this as a result of deeds (karma) which this *ātman* actually performed. The ignorance (*avidyā*) which binds is not simply wrong knowledge; rather it has the form of karma. The *ātman's* essential characteristic—knowledge (*jñāna*)—is contracted or enveloped by past karma, i.e. past karma limits the *ātman's* capacity to know.[2] As a result, when joined to a material body, the *ātman* mistakes what is not itself, namely, body or *anātman*, for itself (*ātman*) and performs acts in order to satisfy the desires of this body (thinking that the desires are its own). Such bodily-inspired acts serve to perpetuate bondage.

> This is the central meaning of all śāstra-s: the individual souls as such are essentially uncontracted, unlimited and perfect knowledge. But they are enveloped by ignorance in the form of *karman*. So they are subject to contraction of 'knowledge proportionate to their *karman*, and

[1] ibid.

[2] There is apparently no beginning to such bondage, no original 'fall'. At least, Rāmānuja makes no attempt to explain how it all begin. Rather, he says, *Gītābhāṣya*, 5. 16 *jñānāvaraṇam anādikāla-pravṛttānanta-karmasaṃcaya-rūpam ajñānam*. 'The ignorance which conceals knowledge has the form of an accumulation of endless acts produced during beginningless time.'

they enter into bodies of various kinds and classes, from Brahmā to a tuft of grass. Their range of knowledge is now confined to that which their various bodies encompass. So these souls are led to identify themselves with their various bodies and to perform acts that follow from this identification. Consequently they enter the continuous surge of saṃsāra. . .[1]

ajñānenāvṛtaṃ—jñāna-virodhinā pūrvapūrva-karmaṇā svaphalānubhava-yogyatvāya asya jñānam āvṛtaṃ . . . saṃkucitam। tena jñānāvaraṇa-rūpeṇa karmaṇā devādi-dehasaṃyogas tattadātmābhimāna-rūpamohaśca jāyate। tataśca tathāvidhātmābhimāna-vāsanā, taducita-karma-vāsanā ca vāsanāto viparītātmābhimānaḥ karmārambhaścopapadyate ॥[2]

Knowledge is concealed by ignorance—one's knowledge is concealed, i.e. contracted, by each previous karma, which is an obstacle to knowledge in order to render one capable of experiencing his fruits; conjunction with a body like that of god, etc., and the delusion which has the form of conception of the soul as that body, are due to that karma which has the form of concealing knowledge; and therefore, there are after-effects[3] of such a conception of the soul and after-effects of the karma produced by that

[1] van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., p. 237.

[2] *Gītābhāṣya*, 5. 15. See also 13. 21.

[3] *vāsanā*—difficult to render with one English word; I borrow van Buitenen's term, *Bhagavadgītā*, op. cit., p. 64.

> (conception); from these after-effects result a (further) misconception of the soul and the beginning of (further) karma.

Mere knowledge of the sense of scriptural texts is not capable of breaking such bonds. Even so, it would seem that, as the Advaitin holds, the cessation of action would be more conducive to release than the performance of action. But this is not the case.

It is not action (*karman*) itself which binds; rather, it is the will of the Supreme Person. The *ātman's* acts please or displease the Supreme Person—pleased, He bestows reward; displeased, He metes out punishment.

> It is the Veda which gives information as to good and evil deeds, the essence of which consists in their pleasing or displeasing the Supreme Person, and as to their results, namely, pleasure and pain, which depend on the grace or wrath of the Lord.[1] For it is he only—the all-knowing, all-powerful, supremely generous one—who being pleased by sacrifices, gifts, offerings, and the like, as well as by pious meditation, is in a position to bestow the different forms of enjoyment in this and the heavenly worlds, and Release which consists in attaining to a nature like his own. For action (*karman*) which is non-intelligent and transitory is incapable of bringing about a result connected with a future time.[2]

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 2. 2. 3; Thibaut, p. 487.

[2] ibid., 3. 2. 37; Thibaut, p. 625. See also *Gītābhāṣya*, 16. 19 and 18. 46.

The Lord has determined bondage out of His mercy as well as His justice. He has determined a situation in which the *ātman* has the capacity to act, indeed, in which action is natural to the *ātman*. He has clearly stated what kind of action is to be performed and what kind is not to be performed, and that right action will be rewarded. And, He has placed Himself in a position (as Inner Ruler) to assist the *ātman* who is bent on pleasing Him. He cannot overlook the transgression of His commands, but He chastises only in order to, and in such a manner as to promote the welfare of the soul.

> The divine Supreme Person, all whose wishes are eternally fulfilled, who is all-knowing and the ruler of all, whose every purpose is immediately realized, having engaged in sport befitting his might and greatness and having settled that work is of a twofold nature, such and such works being good and such and such being evil, and having bestowed on all individual souls bodies and sense-organs capacitating them for entering on such work *and having enjoined scriptures teaching his commands*[1] and having himself entered into those souls as their inner Self abides within them, controlling them as an animating and cheering principle.[2] The souls, on their side, endowed with all the powers imparted to them by the Lord and with bodies and organs bestowed by

[1] Thibaut omits the italicized portion—*svaśāsanāvabodhi śāstraṃ ca pradarśya.*

[2] *anumantṛ*—'Consenter' or 'Permitter'. See Chapter I.

> him, and forming abodes in which he dwells, apply themselves on their own part, and in accordance with their own wishes, to works either good or evil. The Lord, then, recognizing him who performs good actions as one who obeys his commands, blesses him with piety, riches, worldly pleasures, and final release; while him who transgresses his commands he causes to experience the opposites of all these. . . What the Lord aims at is ever to increase happiness to the highest degree, and to this end it is instrumental that he should reprove and reject the infinite and intolerable mass of sins which accumulates in the course of beginningless and endless aeons, and thus check the tendency on the part of individual beings to transgress his laws.[1]

The Advaitin has stated that *karman* performed as a purifier of the mind must be performed without desire for fruit. In this Rāmānuja concurs; *nitya* and *naimittika* karmas prescribed by scripture performed with a view to gaining wealth, progeny or heavenly abode[2] are rewarded, but their reward is equally as binding as is punishment. The non-performance of what the Lord commands invokes His wrath; yet good *karman* (*puṇya*), performed with the desire for fruit, as well as bad *karman* (*apuṇya*, *pāpa*) is binding; albeit, the former

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 2. 2. 3, Thibaut, pp. 488-9; see also *Gītābhāṣya* 3. 10.

[2] *svarga*—the abode of the gods (*deva-s*) from which the soul returns to *saṃsāra* after having enjoyed the fruit of his karma.

results in pleasure, while the latter gives pain. Thus, he who is desirous of release must perform prescribed karmas without desire for their limited fruit:

> Antagonistic to knowledge are all good and evil actions, and hence—as equally giving rise to an undesirable result—they may both be designated as evil... Hence, in order that knowledge may arise, evil works have to be got rid of, and this is effected by the performance of acts of religious duty not aiming at some immediate result such as the heavenly world and the like.[1]

Prescribed karmas are to be performed simply out of the desire to please the Supreme Person, i.e. as worship of the Supreme Person:

> ... since bondage springs from *ajñāna* (ignorance) in the form of an eternal stream of *karman*, it can be destroyed only through knowledge of the kind maintained by us. Such knowledge is to be attained only through the due daily performance of religious duties as prescribed for a man's caste and *āśrama*, such performance being sanctified by the accompanying thought of the true nature of the Self, and having the character of propitiation of the highest Person... mere works produce limited and non-permanent results only,... on the other hand works not aiming at an immediate result but meant to please the highest Person, bring about knowledge of the

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1; Thibaut, pp. 18-19.

> character of devout meditation, and thereby the unlimited and permanent result of the intuition of Brahman being the Self of all.[1]

Rāmānuja supports this view of the relationship between meditation and ritual acts by reference to the Vākyakāra[2] and to scripture. The Vākyakāra states that steady remembrance (*dhruvānusmṛti*) results only from abstention (*viveka*) from impure food, non-attachment (*vimoka*) to desires, repetition (*abhyāsa*), works (*kriyā*) like sacrifice, virtuous conduct (*kalyāṇāni*), freedom from dejection (*anavasāda*), and absence of exultation (*anuddharṣa*).[3] We shall have more to say of these elements at a later point.

Scripture states:

> *vidyāṃ cāvidyāṃ ca yastadvedobhayaṃ saha* ।
> *avidyayā mṛtyuṃ tīrtvā vidyayâmṛtamaśnute* ॥[4]

> He who knows both knowledge and non-knowledge together, crossing over death by non-knowledge, he obtains the immortal by knowledge.

Rāmānuja interprets 'knowledge' (*vidyā*) as meditation; 'non-knowledge' (*avidyā*) as prescribed karmas.[5]

[1] ibid., 1. 1. 1; Thibaut, p. 147.

[2] 'The maker (author) of *Vākya*' (the name of a gloss); see Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., p. 24f. for comments on this thinker and his *Vākya*.

[3] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1; Thibaut, pp. 16-18.

[4] *Īśa Upaniṣad*, 11.

[5] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1; Thibaut, p. 18. Rāmānuja takes *avidyā* here simply as 'that which is other than *vidyā*'; it does not mean 'ignorance'.

In every way Rāmānuja's Means to Release is determined by his doctrinal position, his view of reality. It is not a way of world-renunciation, the way of the ascetic—the material world is real; it is the body of Brahman, neither illusory nor evil. Brahman has manifested the material universe in order to provide individual souls with the means to salvation. He has given the soul the capacity to perform acts in order that it might offer worship to Himself—worship being the natural relationship between a personal *Śeṣin* and *śeṣa*, a Lord and his servant. It is not matter which contaminates; rather, it is selfish will or desire—attachment to matter. The Lord does not desire that souls renounce worldly activity; He desires only that they renounce attachment to material objects—the pursuit of material ends.

Rāmānuja's Means is not a way of self-mastery; neither does it aim at self-realization. It is a way of reliance upon the Supreme Being who is a merciful Lord and its aim is devotion to this Lord, exclusive and constant. This Means encompasses Yoga, but in a context of worship and with the sole purpose of generating devotion. In fact, '. . . meditation is originated in the mind through the grace of the Supreme Person. . . '.[1] We must leave more precise explanation to Part II.

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 3. 4. 26; Thibaut, p. 699; cited in full on pp. 38-9

PART II

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY OUTLINE

Rāmānuja's Means to Release is a combination of knowledge, action and meditation—knowledge of the nature of the real gained from scripture, performance of prescribed karmas without desire for their fruit, and meditation which has the form of steady remembrance of Brahman expressive of ever greater devotion to Brahman. Or, as he explains it in terms of a particularly important *śruti* text: learning (*pāṇḍitya*), childlikeness (*bālya*), and meditation (*mauna*):[1]

> *brāhmaṇaḥ—vidyāvān pāṇḍityaṃ nirvidya—upāsyaṃ brahmatattvaṃ pariśuddhaṃ paripūrṇaṃ ca viditvā śravaṇa-mananābhyām aprāptaṃ vedanaṃ pratilabhyetyarthaḥ—tacca bhagavadbhakti-sahakṛta-sattvavivṛddhikṛtaṃ. . . bālyena tiṣṭhāset. . . bālyaṃ ca pāṇḍityaṃ ca nirvidyātha muniḥ syāt—bālyapāṇḍitye yathāvad upādāya pariśuddhe paripūrṇe brahmaṇi mananaśīlo bhaved nididhyāsanarūpa-vidyāvāptaye* |[2]

[1] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 3. 5 reads: *tasmād brāhmaṇaḥ pāṇḍityaṃ nirvidya bālyena tiṣṭhāset bālyaṃ ca pāṇḍityaṃ ca nirvidyātha muniḥ*—'Therefore, having mastered learning, let a brāhmaṇa seek to stand in childlikeness, and having mastered childlikeness and learning, he is a *muni*.'

[2] *Śrībhāṣya*, 3.4.46.

> A brāhmaṇa, i.e. one who possesses knowledge having mastered learning, i.e. having known that which is to be meditated upon, the true knowledge of Brahman, purified and complete; which means, he obtains that meditation which is obtained from hearing and reflecting; and that (meditation) is due to the increase of *sattva*[1] aided by devotion to the Lord ; . . . he should seek to stand by childlikeness; . . . and having mastered childlikeness and learning, then he should become a *muni*, i.e. he should practise reflection on the pure, complete Brahman, he should obtain knowledge which has the form of meditation.

bālya, defined in a later *sūtra*, is 'freedom from pride and the like' (*dambhādi-rahitatvam*), 'that activity of a child which has the form of not manifesting its own nature' (*bālasya yatsvabhāvānāviṣkārarūpaṃ karma*).[2]

Rāmānuja spells out the details of this Means in terms of the various disciplines (yoga) outlined in the *Bhagavadgītā* and the meditations (*vidyā*) which he says

[1] The material body with which the soul is conjoined is characterized by three qualities: *sattva* (purity or goodness), *rajas* (passion) and *tamas* (darkness), the proportion of these *guṇa-s* which a particular body possesses being determined by past *karman*. Due to the actions of this body one or another of these *guṇa-s* is increased. The performance of scripturally prescribed acts leads to the increase of *sattva* and an increase in *sattva* produces a disposition toward happiness and knowledge. See *Gītābhāṣya*, 14.

[2] *Śrībhāṣya*, 3. 4. 49.

are prescribed in the Upaniṣad-s. The following passage from the *Vedārthasaṃgraha* will serve as a guide for our interpretation of the *Gītābhāṣya* and *Śrībhāṣya* as it gives us something of the ' flavour ' of this Means and concisely sums up its salient features independent of a particular scriptural text:

> *so'yaṃ parabrahmabhūtaḥ puruṣottamo niratiśayapuṇya-saṃcaya-kṣīṇāśeṣajanmopacita-pāparāśeḥ paramapuruṣacaraṇāravinda-śaraṇāgati-janita-tadābhimukhyasya sadācāryopadeśopabṛṃhita-śāstrādhigata-tattvayāthātmyāvabodha-pūrvakāharahar-upacīyamāna-śamadamatapaḥśauca-kṣamārjavabhayābhaya-sthānaviveka-dayâhiṃsādyātmaguṇopetasya varṇāśramocita-paramapuruṣārādhanaveṣanitya-naimittika-karmopasaṃhṛti-niṣiddhaparihāraniṣṭhasya paramapuruṣa-caraṇāravinda-yugalanyastātmātmīyasya tadbhakti-kāritānavarata-stuti-smṛti-namaskṛti-vandana-yatana-kīrtana-guṇaśrvaṇavacanadhyānārcana-praṇāmādi-prītaparamakāruṇikapuruṣottama-prasādavidhvasta-svāntadhvāntasyānanyaprayojanānavarata-niratiśaya-priyaviśadatama-pratyakṣatāpannānudhyānarūpa-bhaktyekalabhyaḥ ।*[1]
>
> That Supreme Person who is the HighestBrahman is to be obtained only by the *bhakti* which has the form of meditation which seeks no other object, is incessant, extremely dear and has reached a state of most vivid perception, of one whose mass of evil acts heaped up during all previous births

[1] Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., 91, p. 126.

> is destroyed by the accumulation of unequalled good acts, one toward whom the Supreme Person is favourable due to seeking refuge at His lotus-like feet, one who has developed spiritual qualities such as *śama*, *dama*, *tapas*, *śauca*, *kṣamā*, *ārjava*, *bhayābhayasthāna-viveka*, *dayā*, and *ahiṃsā*, accumulating them day by day after having gained knowledge of the true nature of the real from the scriptures, made strong by the instruction of good teachers, one who is devoted to the avoidance of what is forbidden and the performance of daily and occasional acts appropriate to each caste and stage of life, as forms of worship of the Supreme Person, one who with all that is his throws himself at the two lotus-like feet of the Supreme Person, one for whom the darkness concealing the innermost self has been destroyed by the grace of the supremely compassionate Supreme Person who is pleased by the incessant *stuti*, *smṛti*, *namaskṛti*, *vandana*, *yatana*, *kīrtana*, *guṇaśravaṇa-vacana*, *dhyāna*, *arcana*, *praṇāma*, and the like, which are due to that (devotion).[1]

The over-all emphasis of the passage is clearly on the necessity of taking refuge with the Supreme Person. Rāmānuja again and again and in various ways will state that release is possible only by gaining the assistance of Brahman, the Inner Ruler. The series of subordinate

[1] Those terms not taken over from the Sanskrit will be defined at a later point.

clauses here indicates that everything from the destruction of past sins to Śruti, Smṛti, etc. is preparatory to and secondary to the *bhakti* which has the form of meditation. The quotes which follow this passage indicate: (1) that what is stated is to be understood in terms of the disciplines of the *Bhagavadgītā*; and (2) that meditation which has the form of *bhakti*, and *karman* performed as worship, are the two focal points around which all else is to be ordered:

> *taduktaṃ paramagurubhir bhagavad-yāmunācārya-pādaiḥ—ubhayaparikarmita-svāntasyaikāntikātyantika-bhaktiyoga-labhya iti ।*
> *jñānayoga-karmayoga-saṃskṛtāntaḥkaraṇasyety arthaḥ ।*
> *tathā ca śrutiḥ—*
> *vidyāṃ cāvidyāṃ ca yastadvedobhayaṃ saha ।*
> *avidyayā mṛtyuṃ tīrtvā vidyayāmṛtamaśnute* [1] ॥
> *iti ।*
> *atrāvidyā-śabdena vidyetaratvād varṇāśramācārādi pūrvoktaṃ karmocyate vidyāśabdena ca bhakti-rūpāpannaṃ dhyānamucyate ।* [2]
>
> This has been stated by the eminent guru, Bhagavān Yāmunacārya in, 'He is to be obtained by the exclusive and intense Bhakti-yoga of one whose innermost being has been purified by both'—(the latter) means, 'by one whose inner organ has been purified by

[1] *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad*, 11.
[2] Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, p. 126.

Karmayoga and Jñānayoga'. And likewise the Śruti:

'He who knows both *vidyā* and *avidyā*, having crossed over death by *avidyā*, gains immortality by *vidyā*'

where by the word *avidyā* is meant that which is other than *vidyā* or the above-mentioned *karman* according to caste and *āśrama*, etc. and by the word *vidyā* is meant meditation which has the form of *bhakti*.

Then, after a description of the higher devotion (*parabhakti*), Rāmānuja says that such devotion arises from Bhaktiyoga accompanied by the performance of karma based on knowledge from scripture as stated above, i.e. as stated in our first quote from the *Vedārthasaṃgraha*.[1]

The *Gītābhāṣya* summarizes the Means to Release as follows:

atyarthaprīti-virahitāt karkaśarūpāt smṛtyabhyāsād akṣara-yāthātmyānusaṃdhāna-pūrvakaṃ tadāparokṣya-jñānamevâtmahitatve viśiṣyate । ātmāparokṣya-jñānād apyaniṣpanna-rūpāt tadupāyabhūtātmadhyānam evātmahitatve viśiṣyate । taddhyānādapy-aniṣpannarūpāt tadupāyabhūtaṃ phala-tyāgenānuṣṭhitaṃ karmaiva viśiṣyate । anabhisaṃhita-phalād anuṣṭhitāt karmaṇo'nantarameva nirastapāpatayā manasaḥ śāntīr bhaviṣyati । śānte manasi ātmadhyānaṃ saṃpatsyate, dhyānācca tadāparokṣyam, tadāparokṣyāt parā bhaktir iti bhaktiyogābhyāsāśaktasyātma-niṣṭhaiva śreyasī । ātmaniṣṭha-

[1] Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, p. 126.

syāpy aśāntamanaso niṣṭhāprāptaye'ntargatātmajñānā-nabhisaṃhitaphala-karmaniṣṭhiva śreyasītyarthaḥ ॥[1]

When the practice of remembrance is difficult due to the absence of intense love, then to the benefit of the *ātman* direct knowledge of that (*ātman*) preceded by reflection on true nature of the *akṣara* (*ātman*) is better; when even direct knowledge of the *ātman* is unaccomplished, then to the benefit of the *ātman* the meditation on the *ātman* which is the means to that (direct knowledge) is better; when even meditation on that (*ātman*) is unaccomplished, then karma performed with renunciation of the fruit which is the means to that (meditation) is better; by the fact that sins are destroyed immediately due to the performance of *karman* without attachment for the fruit, peace will come to the *manas*; when the *manas* is peaceful, meditation on the *ātman* will be accomplished and from meditation, direct (vision) of the *ātman*; then, from direct (vision), *parabhakti*; for one who is unable to practise Bhaktiyoga, devotion to the *ātman* is best; for the *ātmaniṣṭha* whose *manas* is not peaceful, devotion to *karman* without attachment for the fruit, since it includes within it knowledge of the *ātman*, is best in order to obtain devotion.

The sequence here is:

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 12. 12.

1) Steadiness or devotion in *karman* (*karmaniṣṭhā*) =Karmayoga*[1]
2) A clam or peaceful *manas*
3) Meditation on the *ātman* (*ātmadhyāna*) = Dhyānayoga*
4) Direct knowledge of the *ātman* (*ātmāparokṣya-jñāna*) = *ātmadarśana**
5) The higher *bhakti* (*parabhakti*)
6) Remembrance (*smṛti*) = Bhaktiyoga

Seeking to reconcile *Vedārthasaṃgraha* and *Gītā-bhāṣya* we note that the former makes no clear reference to meditation on the individual *ātman* (although the result of such meditation is referred to in, 'when the darkness concealing the innermost self has been destroyed') and the latter makes no reference to the development of spiritual qualities like *śama* and *dama* or to non-meditative expressions of *bhakti* such as *stuti*, *namaskṛti*, etc. The question of meditation on the individual *ātman* is resolved when we see that Rāmānuja uses the term Bhaktiyoga both with reference to (*a*) the meditation which has the form of remembrance of the Supreme Person:

> *madguṇānusaṃdhānakṛta-madekapriyatvākāraṃ bhaktiyogam. . .* [2]
>
> . . . Bhaktiyoga which has the form of exclusive love for Me (the Supreme Person), due to reflection on My qualities. . .

[1] *indicates the term most often used by Rāmānuja to designate this particular aspect of his *upāya*.

[2] *Gītābhāṣya*, 12. 11.

and with reference to (*b*) meditation which includes within it meditation on the *ātman* and meditation on the Supreme:

> In all meditations on the highest Self (*paravidyā*) the nature of the meditating subject has to be ascertained no less than the nature of the object of meditation. . . for the personal Self (*pratyagātman*) constitutes the body of Brahman which is the object of meditations, and hence itself falls under the category of object of meditation. The character of such meditation, therefore, is that it is a meditation on the highest Self as having for its body the individual self. . . [1]
>
> *mām. . . bhaktiyogena ca yaḥ sevate. . . brahmabhāvayogyo bhavati, yathāvasthitam ātmānam amṛtam avyayaṃ prāpnotītyarthaḥ* |[2]
>
> He who serves Me with Bhaktiyoga is fit to become Brahman, i.e. he obtains the imperishable, immortal *ātman* as it is in itself. . .
>
> *evaṃbhūto dhyānayogaṃ kurvan brahmabhūyāya kalpate—brahmabhāvāya kalpate, sarvabandhavinirmukto yathāvasthitam ātmānam anubhavati* |[3]
>
> Performing Dhyānayoga in this way, he is fit to become Brahman, i.e. he is fit for the state of Brahman; freed from all bonds, he experiences the *ātman* as it is in itself.

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 3. 3. 51-2; Thibaut, pp. 673, 675.
[2] *Gītābhāṣya*, 14. 26..
[3] ibid., 18. 51-3 end.

The first of these passages is clear. What is shown by the second and third is that Bhaktiyoga refers to meditation which leads to seeing the individual *ātman*, i.e. *ātmadhyāna* or Dhyānayoga.[1] '*ātma*-meditation' and reflection on the qualities of the Supreme Person are a continuity of meditation in which the major focus shifts from the individual to the Supreme. Bhaktiyoga in the narrow sense is the *dhyāna* which we have discussed in Part I. Dhyānayoga or *ātmadhyāna* will be shown to encompass the *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra* and *dhāraṇā* which precede *dhyāna*. As stated in Part I, the goal of Rāmānuja's Patañjalian-type Yoga is not self-realization; however, a vison of the individual soul as it is in itself—distinct from *prakṛti*, and *śeṣa* to the Supreme Soul—is a necessary preliminary to meditation on the Supreme Soul. Such a vision is propaedeutic to the *dhyāna* which has the form of remembrance or 'reflection on My qualities'.

> *tadevaṃ mumukṣubhiḥ prāpyatayā vedāntodita-nirasta-nikhilāvidyādi - doṣagandhānavadhikātiśayāsaṃkhyeya-kalyāṇaguṇagaṇa-parabrahma-puruṣottama-prāptyupāyabhūta-vedanopāsanā-dhyānādi-śabdavācyāṃ tadaikāntikātyantikabhaktiṃ vaktuṃ tadaṅgabhūtaṃ . . . prāpturātmano yāthâtmya-darśanaṃ . . . 'adhyātma-yogādhigamena devaṃ matvā dhīro harṣaśokau jahāti' ityevamādiṣu devaṃ matveti vidhīyamāna-para-*

[1] It is not unusual for Rāmānuja to take '*brahman*' of the *Bhagavadgītā* to mean 'individual *ātman*' (embodied soul).

vidyâṅgatayâdhyātma-yogādhigameneti pratyagātma-jñānamapi vidhāya . . .[1]

> In this manner now, in order to state the one-pointed, supreme devotion which is to be spoken of by words such as *vedana*, *upāsana* and *dhyāna* and which is the means to obtain the Supreme Person, the highest Brahman, who is a mass of boundless, absolute and innumerable auspicious qualities and who is without even a trace of imperfections like *avidyā* and who is spoken of in the Vedānta as that which is to be obtained by those desirous of release, that *darśana* of the true nature of the obtainer-*ātman* which is a preliminary step to that (*bhakti*). . . [has been stated]; . . . in passages like, 'Having comprehended the *deva* by means of meditation on the inner *ātman*, the wise man abandons joy and sorrow'; 'having comprehended the *deva*', indicates what is accomplished and 'by means of meditation on the inner *ātman*' indicates the knowledge of the individual *ātman* as propaedeutic to the higher meditation (*paravidyā*).

And, as above, 'In all meditations on the highest Self (*paravidyā*) the nature of the meditating subject has to be ascertained no less than the nature of the object of meditation. . . '. Dhyānayoga is characterized as '*ātma*-meditation' because the immediate goal of such

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 3, introduction; see also the introduction to 6. 47.

meditation is a vision of the individual *ātman* (*ātma-darśana*). This vision is not an end in itself, but the link between *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna*—a vision of the individual *ātman* gives way to meditation on the Supreme *Ātman*. We shall now have to broaden our understanding of the term *yoga*. What was earlier spoken of as the performance of prescribed karmas without desire for fruit is now to be considered under the headi g, 'Karmayoga'. And, as stated above, both Dhyānayoga and Bhaktiyoga refer to Rāmānuja's special treatment of Patañjali's eight-member Yoga. It would seem that Rāmānuja employs the term 'Dhyānayoga', 'discipline of meditation', primarily in order to distinguish Patañjalian-type Yoga from Karmayoga, 'discipline of action'; and the term 'Bhaktiyoga', 'discipline of devotion', in order to indicate the chief characteristic and goal of his Patañjalian-type Yoga. On the basis of these considerations we may take the Bhaktiyoga of the *Vedārthasaṃgraha* as inclusive of Dhyānayoga or *ātma*-meditation.

The development of spiritual qualities like *śama* and *dama* will be seen to be *generally* helpful to one desirous of release, i.e. it is not of the nature of a discipline (*yoga*). *Śama*, *dama*, etc., are 'qualities which are to be chosen as a means to knowledge of the *ātman*'[1] —qualities which are 'favourable to knowledge of the *ātman*'.[2] Thus, we do not find reference to such

[1] ibid., 13. 7 *ātmajñānasādhanatayopādeyā guṇāḥ.*
[2] ibid., 13. 11—*ātmajñānopayogi.*

development in our *Gītābhāṣya* summary of disciplines but do find numerous references to it elsewhere in the *Gītābhāṣya*.

Non-meditative expressions of devotion such as *stuti* and *namaskṛti* are also generally helpful, only with respect to the higher meditation rather than to the 'knowledge of the *ātman*':

> *athaivaṃvidha-smṛtyabhyāse'py asamartho'si matkarma-paramo bhava—madīyāni karmāṇy ālaya-nirmāṇodyānakaraṇa- pradīpāropaṇa- mārjanābhyukṣaṇopalepana-puṣpāharaṇa-pūjāpravartana-nāmasaṃkīrtana-pradakṣiṇa-stutinamaskārādīni etāny atyartha-priyatvenācara; atyarthapriyatvena madarthaṃ karmāṇi kurvann api acirād abhyāsayoga-pūrvikāṃ mayi sthirāṃ cittasthitiṃ labdhvā matprāpti-rūpāṃ siddhim avāpsyasi* |[1]
>
> If you have no ability for practice of remembrance (*smṛti*) like this, be intent on *karman* for Me—karmas belonging to Me such as construction of temples, creation of gardens, lighting up lamps, sweeping, sprinkling water and otherwise beautifying, gathering flowers and worshipping Me therewith, repeating (My) names (*nāmasaṃkīrtana*), circumambulating, praising (*stuti*), bowing (*namaskāra*), etc.—perform these with intense love; even performing karmas with intense love for My sake, having soon obtained steady fixture of thought in Me by the

[1] ibid., 12. 10.

> yoga of practice, you will obtain perfection of the form of obtaining Me.

Such expressions of devotion are helpful to one who has difficulty at the *dhyāna* stage of meditative yoga. This matter will be discussed in detail at a later point.

On the basis of the above citations and discussion we conclude that Rāmānuja's Means to Release is a Karmayoga-Bhaktiyoga sequence, based on knowledge from scripture and assisted by the development of certain spiritual qualities and the practice of certain non-meditative expressions of devotion. For one who is desirous of release, the steps to be taken towards the attainment of release are as follows:

Step I—The acquisition of right knowledge from scripture.

Step II—The development of spiritual qualities such as *śama* and *dama*; this lends support to the proper performance of *karman* and to meditation.

Step III—The performance of *karman* as worship of the Supreme Person; this destroys sins and promotes calmness of the *manas*, and is thereby propaedeutic to meditation.

Step IV—Meditation, the purpose of which is to generate devotion; this results first in a vision of the individual *ātman*, and second, due to the devotion which arises from this vision, in meditation on the Supreme Person which has the

form of reflection on His attributes. Such meditation engaged in daily until death promotes ever greater devotion to the Supreme Person.

Step V— The practice of various non-meditative expressions of devotion as support for meditation on the Supreme Person.

CHAPTER II

RIGHT KNOWLEDGE AND THE SPIRITUAL QUALITIES

> '[One who has] gained knowledge of the true nature of the real from the scriptures, (knowledge) made strong by the instruction of good teachers. . .'

For one who is desirous of release, the first step is to gain right knowledge from scripture under the guidance of a competent teacher (*ācārya*). Right knowledge of the nature of the individual soul, the Supreme Being, etc. is fundamental to all religious action, i.e. action which promotes the release of the soul from bondage. Lacking this 'theological understanding' which, as has been stated, is given only in scripture, one cannot pursue release (at least with any hope of gaining it). Rāmānuja states this most forcefully in disqualifying the Śūdra:[1]

> It is impossible that the capability of performing meditations on Brahman should belong to a person not knowing the nature of Brahman

[1] Last of the four traditional caste groupings—Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, Śūdra. Rāmānuja is consistent throughout in restricting the pursuit of release to members of the first three castes. See *Gītābhāṣya*, 9. 29 and 18. 44.

> and the due modes of meditation, and not qualified by the knowledge of the requisite preliminaries of such meditation, namely, recitation of the Veda, sacrifices, and so on. Mere want or desire does not impart qualification to a person destitute of the required capability. And this absence of capability is due, in the Śūdra's case, to absence of legitimate study of the Veda.[1]

Simple knowledge of the sense of the scriptural texts—knowledge *about* the *ātman*, Brahman and the relationship between the two, however important—is not in itself sufficient to effect release. Knowledge must be *applied*. The exclusive and constant devotion which moves the Supreme Person to take the *ātman* to Himself arises only out of the *experience* of the *ātman* as it is in itself, followed by the *experience* of Brahman as Inner Ruler, Supreme Person, Creator, Preserver, Destroyer, possessed of all auspicious qualities, etc. To gain such experience requires discipline—discipline of the body to which the *ātman* is conjoined and, principally, its mental faculties.

> *mana eva manuṣyāṇāṃ kāraṇaṃ bandha-mokṣayoḥ* ।
> *bandhāya viṣayāsaṅgi muktyai nirviṣayaṃ manaḥ* ॥[2]
>
> To men, the *manas* alone is the cause of bondage and of release; the *manas* attached to

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 3. 32; Thibaut, p. 338.

[2] *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, 6. 7. 28—quoted by Rāmānuja in *Gītābhāṣya*, 6. 6. See also *Maitrāyaṇyupaniṣad*, 4.11.

> sense-objects makes for bondage; the *manas* which is not attached to sense-objects makes for release.

Whatever conception of itself the *ātman* has, in accordance with that, it determines its highest goal.[1] The *ātman*, which conceives of itself as identical with the material body to which it is conjoined, considers that its highest goal is to satisfy the desires of this body; it acts accordingly and condemns itself to further bondage. The *ātman* which knows itself in truth considers that its highest goal is the attainment of Brahman; it acts accordingly and gains release. Conjoined to a material body, the *ātman* functions under the influence of the various organs which compose this body—it forms its concept of itself in terms of what is presented to it through these organs. And, the principal organ or faculty involved is the *manas*. In its narrow sense, the *manas* is the 'inner organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*) of perception and cognition, the instrument by which objects of sense affect the *ātman*.'[2] Rāmānuja very often uses it in a broader sense inclusive of the *buddhi*, the *ahaṃkāra*, and the *citta*,[3] and in this sense it may be translated as 'mind':

> *Buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, and *citta*. . . are mere designations of the *manas*, according as the latter is

[1] Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., 142, p. 297.

[2] Monier-Williams, Sanskṛit Dictionary, p. 783.

[3] *buddhi*—the intellectual faculty, the faculty of apprehension (*adhyavasāya*) or comprehension; *ahaṃkāra*—literally, maker of 'I', the faculty of self-conception; *citta*—the faculty of thinking.

> engaged in the functions of deciding (*adhyavasāya*), or misconception (*abhimāna*), or thinking (*cintā*).[1]

When the *manas* is agitated by sense-objects, the individual *ātman* is led to identify itself with body. When the *manas* is turned away from sense-objects and focused on the individual *ātman* within, that *ātman* perceives itself as it truly is.[2]

Armed with knowledge of the truth, one must undertake to restrain or control the *manas* and eventually to completely withdraw it from contact with sense-objects. This is done by cultivating certain spiritual qualities, by disciplining the *manas* in the performance of daily acts and by meditation.

> 'One who has developed spiritual qualities such as *śama*, *dama*, *tapas*, *śauca*, *kṣamā*, *ārjava*, *bhayâbhaya-sthāna-viveka*, *dayā*, and *ahiṃsā*, accumulating them day by day. . .'

Several lists of 'qualities which are to be chosen as the means to knowledge of the soul'[3] are given in Rāmānuja's writings, most of them following the text of the *Bhagavadgītā*.[4] Those qualities which Rāmānuja enumerates independent of any specific scriptural text and, which he refers to more than once, are those enumerated in our guide-passage from the *Vedārthasaṃgraha*: *śama*, *dama*, *tapas*, *śauca*, *kṣamā*, *ārjava*, *bhayâbhayasthānaviveka*, *dayā* and *ahiṃsā*.

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 2. 4. 5; Thibaut, p. 571.
[2] Explained in Part II, Chapters III and VI.
[3] *Gītābhāṣya*, 13. 7, noted above p. 60, fn. 1.
[4] *Bhagavadgītā*, 10. 4-5; 12. 13-14; 13. 7-9, 11; 16. 1-3; 18. 42.

Śama is 'restraint of the outward sense-organs';[1] *dama* is 'restraint of the inner organ' (the *manas* or *antaḥkaraṇa*).[2] *Tapas* is 'forms of mortification mentioned in the sacred texts which take the form of restricting bodily enjoyment'.[3] A more specific definition is given in another context; *tapas* is '. . . the performance of austerities, the *cāndrāyaṇa* fast,[4] the fast of the twelfth day of the lunar fortnight, and the like, which prepare one for acts pleasing to the Lord'.[5] Such *tapas* is not intended to negate the body but to chasten it. That which is conducive to release is not rejection of the material body, but distinction of soul from that body. And, even this *tapas* (*kṛcchra*, *cāndrāyaṇa*, etc.) is ruled out by Rāmānuja's interpretation of *Bhagavadgītā* 18. 66 in which he states that expiations (*prāyaścitta*) such as *kṛcchra* and *cāndrāyaṇa* are unnecessary for one who takes refuge in the Supreme Soul.[6]

Qualities such as *śama*, *dama* and *tapas* were traditionally reserved to those in the third and fourth *āśrama-s* who had renounced the world. Rāmānuja sets this

[1] *śamaḥ—bāhyendriya-niyamanam. Gītābhāsya* 18. 42.

[2] *damaḥ—antaḥkaraṇa-niyamanam. Gītābhāsya* 18. 42.

[3] *tapaḥ—bhoga-niyamanarūpaḥ śāstrasiddhaḥ kāyakleśaḥ. Gītābhāṣya*, 18. 42.

[4] A fast regulated by the moon, the food being diminished every day by one mouthful, for the dark fortnight, and increased in like manner during the bright fortnight.

[5] *kṛcchra-cāndrāyaṇa-dvādaśyupavāsāder bhagavatprīṇana-karmayogyatāpādanasya karaṇam—Gītābhāṣya*, 16. 1-3.

[6] *tattat-prāyaścitta-rūpān kṛcchra-cāndrāyaṇa. . . agniṣṭomādikān. . . sarvān dharmān parityajya. . .* See Introduction, p. xiii.

traditional understanding aside. We have seen that one may undertake meditation on Brhaman in any one of the *āśrama-s*. Thus, in *Śrībhāṣya* 3. 4. 27 the *pūrvapakṣin*[1] states the incompatibility of *śama, dama* and the like with the duties of the householder requiring the *exercise* of both outer and inner organs. Not so, Rāmānuja—in so far as the householder attempts meditation he must develop *śama, dama*, and the like, since these are prescribed by scripture as auxiliaries to meditation (*vidyāṅga*). They assist concentration of thought (*cittasamādhāna*) which gives rise to meditation. Moreover, there is no contradiction since:

> works enjoined by Scripture have the power of pleasing the Supreme Person, and hence, through his grace, to cause the destruction of all mental impressions obstructive of calmness and concentration of mind. Hence calmness of mind and the rest are to be aimed at and practised by householders also.[2]

Śauca is ' purity ', but of a particular kind—' that which makes one fit for acts enjoined by scripture ';[3] more specifically, it is ' the state of mind, speech and body established in scripture which befit one for knowledge of the soul and the means to acquire that (knowledge)'.[4]

[1] literally, ' former view '; the objector or one against whom the *siddhānta* is established.

[2] *Śrībhāṣya*. 3. 4. 27; Thibaut, p. 701.

[3] *śaucaṃ—śāstrīyakarmayogyatā—Gītābhāṣya*, 18. 42.

[4] *śaucaṃ—ātmajñāna-tatsādhana-yogyatā manovākkāyagatā śāstra-siddhā—Gītābhāṣya*, 13. 7.

That aspect of such purity on which Rāmānuja gives most emphasis is the consumption of pure food. This is encompassed under the Vākyakāra's *viveka*—

> *āhāraśuddhau sattvaśuddhiḥ sattvaśuddhau dhruvā smṛtiḥ*[1]
>
> From purity of food, purity of mind; from purity of mind, steady remembrance.

Pure food is only that food which has been offered in worship (*yajña*—sacrifice, etc.) to the Supreme.[2]

> *śarīrayātrā hi yajñaśiṣṭāśanena nirvartyamānā samyagjñānāya prabhavati, anyathā te tvaghaṃ bhuñjate pāpāḥ ity ayajñaśiṣṭāgharūpāśanāpyāyanaṃ manaso viparīta-jñānāya bhavati | 'annamayaṃ hi somya manaḥ' ityannena hi mana āpyāyate, 'āhāraśuddhau sattva-śuddhiḥ sattvaśuddhau dhruvā smṛtiḥ | smṛtilambhe sarva-granthīnāṃ vipramokṣaḥ', iti brahma-sākṣātkāra-rūpaṃ jñānam āhāraśuddhyāyattaṃ śrūyate |*[3]
>
> Maintaining the body by eating the remains of sacrifice increases right knowledge; otherwise, as is indicated by, 'But those sinners eat sin (who cook for their own selfish sakes)'—*Bhagavad-gītā*, 3. 13—, dependence upon food which is

[1] *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 7. 26; quoted in *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1; Thibaut, p. 18.

[2] *Gītābhāṣya*, 3. 13f.; 14. 17; 17. 8; *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1; Thibaut, p. 147.

[3] *Gītābhāṣya* 18.7; see also 3. 8; 3. 13.

the remainder of non-sacrifice, which has the form of sin, makes for wrong knowledge in the *manas*; for, as declared in 'My dear, the *manas* consists of food', the *manas* thrives by means of food; that knowledge which has the form of direct perception of Brahman depends upon purity of food is declared by the *śruti*:

> 'When the food is pure, the mind becomes pure; when the mind is pure, remembrance becomes steady; when remembrance is obtained, there is loosening of all ties'.

In one word, *kṣamā* is 'forgiveness'; Rāmānuja defines it as, 'freedom from disturbance of mind toward others even when undergoing suffering caused by them'.[1] *Ārjava* is 'integrity', or 'honesty', 'a manifestation of outward behaviour toward others which is consistent with the mind.'[2] *Bhayābhayasthānaviveka* may be translated, 'discrimination of things which cause fear and non-fear', i.e. 'distinguishing that of which one should be afraid and that of which one need not be afraid'. Fear (*bhayam*) is 'the unhappiness in seeing the cause for some impending suffering'.[3] While the rationale for the development of such qualities as these is not explicit in Rāmānuja, it is clearly implied that they are meant to free one from certain emotional expressions

[1] *kṣamā—paranimitta-pīḍānubhave 'pi pareṣu taṃ prati cittavikāra-rahitatā*—ibid., 16. 1-3.

[2] *ārjavaṃ—pareṣu mano'nurūpaṃ bāhyaceṣṭāprakāśanam*—ibid.,18.42.

[3] *bhayam—āgāmino duḥkhasya hetudarśanajaṃ duḥkham*—ibid., 10. 4-5.

associated with embodiedness which are detrimental to the proper composure of the mind. This is the sense of the Vākyakāra's *anavasāda* and *anuddharṣa*. The former is defined as, 'freedom from dejection under unfavourable circumstances'; the latter as, 'freedom from exultation under favourable circumstances'.[1] The idea is that, as far as is possible, one should be free of emotional disturbances, since they are not conducive to proper concentration.

The same rationale applies to *dayā*, 'compassion', 'being unable to bear suffering on the part of all beings',[2] and *ahiṃsā*, 'not being the cause of suffering to others',[3] 'the being free from tormenting in speech, mind and body';[4] but in their case something more is involved. Whereas 'forgiveness' and 'integrity' by Rāmānuja's definition have no *moral* significance, i.e. acting contrarywise merely disturbs the composure of the mind, but does not blemish the soul, it is explicit that lack of compassion, and violence are very displeasing to the Supreme Person and are punished by embodiment in static beings such as plants.[5]

With regard to *ahiṃsā*, Rāmānuja raises the question as to whether there is not a contradiction between this injunction and that of sacrifice (*yajña*) in which an

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1; Thibaut, p. 18-19.

[2] *dayā bhūteṣu—sarvabhūteṣu duḥkhāsahiṣṇutvam—Gītābhāṣya*, 16. 1-3.

[3] *ahiṃsā—paraduḥkhāhetutvam*—ibid., 10. 4-5.

[4] *Gītābhāṣya*, 13. 7.

[5] *Śrībhāṣya*, 3. 1. 25.

animal is killed. After considerable debate, he answers in the negative:

> For Scripture declares that killing of sacrificial animals makes them go up to the heavenly world, and therefore is not of the nature of harm... An action which is the means of supreme exaltation is not of the nature of harm, even if it involves some little pain; it rather is of beneficial nature.[1]

These particular qualities were widely recognized as those most helpful to the *mumukṣu*. They are included in the four means (*sādhanacatuṣṭaya*) of the Advaita—*śamadamādi-sādhanasaṃpat*; and taken together, they comprise the Yama and Niyama of Patañjali's Yoga. And, as far as I can see, there is no significant difference between Rāmānuja's definition of them and that of the Advaitin and Patañjali. Rāmānuja places less emphasis on austerity or asceticism. The significant difference between Rāmānuja's treatment of these qualities and that of the Advaitin and Patañjali is the fact that the *mumukṣu* depends upon the grace of the Supreme Person rather than upon his own effort in order to bring them to perfection:

> Works enjoined by Scripture have the power of pleasing the Supreme Person, and hence, through his grace, to cause the destruction of all mental impressions obstructive of calmness and concentration of mind.[2]

[1] ibid., 3. 1. 25; Thibaut, p. 599.
[2] *Śrībhāṣya*, 3. 4. 27; Thibau , p. 701.

CHAPTER III

KARMAYOGA

'One who is devoted to the avoidance of what is forbidden and the performance of daily and occasional acts appropriate to each caste and stage of life, as forms of worship of the Supreme Person. . .'

yajñadāna-tapaḥprabhṛti vaidikaṃ karma mumukṣuṇā na kadācidapi tyājyam, api tvāprayāṇād aharahaḥ kāryameva ||[1]

Vedic *karman—yajña, dāna, tapas* and the rest—is never to be abandoned by the *mumukṣu*, but is to be performed daily until death.

Those daily (*nitya*) and occasional (*naimittika*) karmas prescribed in *śruti* and *smṛti* for one's particular caste (*varṇa*) and stage of life (*āśrama*)—sacrifice (*yajña*), charity (*dāna*), penance (*tapas*), fasting (*anāśaka*), etc.; principally sacrifice (*yajña*) and more specifically, the five great sacrifices (*pañca-mahāyajña-s*)[2]—are to be

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 18. 5.

[2] Daily offerings to: (1) all created things (*bhūta-yajña*), (2) the manes or forefathers (*pitṛ-yajña*), (3) the gods (*deva-yajña*), (4) human beings (*manuṣya-yajña*) and (5) the sacred scriptures (*brahma-yajña*).

performed by one desirous of release until the death of his present body. Why so? (*kutaḥ*)

> *yajñadāna-tapaḥprabhṛtīnī varṇāśrama-saṃbandhīni karmāṇi manīṣiṇāṃ—mananaśīlānāṃ pāvanāni | mananam upāsanam, mumukṣūṇāṃ yāvajjīvam upāsanaṃ kurvatām upāsananiṣpatti-virodhi-prācīnakarma-vināśanānītyarthaḥ ||*[1]
>
> [because] karmas associated with *varṇa* and *āśrama*—*yājña*, *dāna*, *tapas* and the rest—are purifiers of the wise, i.e. of those whose practice is reflection—reflection (*manana*) is meditation (*upāsana*); they destroy the past karma, which is an obstacle to the accomplishment of meditation, of those who desire release and engage in meditation throughout their life.

The performance of Vedic karmas purifies in two ways: (1) As explained above,[2] *yajña* consecrates food, and pure food makes for right knowledge in the *manas*; (2) As we shall now explain, *yajña*, *dāna*, etc., when performed in the light of one's knowledge of the real gained from scripture, serve to detach the *manas* from sense-objects and turn it toward the *ātman* within. This is the province of Karmayoga.[3]

Those who desire wealth, progeny, or heavenly abode perform the very same *karman* as those who desire release. The distinction lies, not in the act itself, but,

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 18. 5.
[2] See p. 70.
[3] See *Gītābhāṣya*, 2. 39.

in the desire or will (*saṃkalpa*) with which the act is performed:

> *ekasminn eva karmaṇi vartamānāḥ saṃkalpa-mātra-bhedena kecid atyalpaphalabhāginaś cyavana-svabhāvāśca bhavanti, kecanānavadhikātiśayānanda-paramapuruṣa-prāptirūpa-phalabhāgino 'punarāvartin-aśca bhavanti . . . darśapūrṇamāsādibhiḥ karma-bhiḥ indrādīn yajāmaha iti indrādiyajanasaṃkalpā ye, ta indrādīn yānti । . . . ye tu taireva yajñair devapitṛbhūtaśarīrakaṃ paramātmānaṃ bhagavantaṃ vāsudevaṃ yajāmaha iti māṃ yajante, te madyājino māmeva yānti ।*[1]
>
> Abiding in the very same *karman*, by the mere difference of will, some merit very insignificant fruit and by nature fall back to rebirth; some merit fruit of the form of obtaining the Supreme Person who is unlimited, pre-eminent bliss and do not return; . . . Those whose will is worship of Indra and the like, thinking, 'Let us worship Indra and the like with karmas like the *darśa-pūrṇamāsa*',[2] go to Indra and the like; (those who worship the *pitṛ-s* go to them; etc.) but those who worship Me thinking, 'Let us worship with these sacrifices only the Lord Vāsudeva, the Supreme Soul, whose body are the *deva-s*, *pitṛ-s* and *bhūta-s*', they, worshipping Me, go to Me only.

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 9. 24-5.

[2] A rite performed on the days of the new and of the full moon.

Some say that every action, once performed, must bear its fruit; that each of the karmas prescribed by the scriptures has an appropriate fruit; that fruit inevitably follows act and that, therefore, one desirous of release should not perform action at all. This is not the case —the result of any act depends on the purpose to which it is applied, not on the action itself, based on the Mīmāṃsaka 'principle of the variety of application' (*viniyogapṛthaktva-nyāya*); and scripture states that such acts may be applied to the end of gaining release:[1]

> Brāhmaṇa-s desire to know Him by means of study of the Veda-s, by sacrifice, charity, penance, and by fasting.[2]

And, more important, this is based on the fact that it is the Lord who gives the fruit, not some unexplainable principle inherent in the act itself.[3] Thus, the *mumukṣu* should perform all prescribed karmas without desire for their limited fruits and with the sole desire for release:

> *nityeṣu naimittikeṣu karmasu pradhāna-phalāny avāntaraphalāni ca yāni śrūyamāṇāni tāni sarvāṇi parityajya mokṣaika-phalatayā sarvāṇi karmāṇi eka-śāstrārthatayânuṣṭheyāni* ।[4]
>
> Having given up all the primary and secondary fruits which are stated in scripture for daily and occasional karmas, *in accordance with the*

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 18. 11-12.
[2] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4. 4. 22— See Part I, Chapter IV.
[3] See Part I, Chapter IV.
[4] *Gītābhāṣya*, 2. 41.

> *one purpose* of scripture, all karmas are to be performed with release as the sole fruit.

Rather than complete renunciation (*saṃnyāsa*) of action (the traditional view—Kapila's Sāṃkhya is singled out)[1], which is contrary to divine will and which is impossible anyway if one is to support the physical body which is the instrument of release,[2] one should cultivate mental renunciation. Having ceased to desire the fruit of any action, one has in effect ceased to act in as much as the act is not binding:

> *sa evaṃbhūtaḥ karma kurvann api anātmany ātmābhimānena na lipyate—na saṃbadhyate | ato 'cireṇātmānaṃ prāpnoti |*[3]
>
> He who is thus, even performing *karman*, is not polluted by the mistaken notion of *ātman* in what is not *ātman*; he is not bound; therefore, before long, he obtains the *ātman*.

Renunciation of fruit implies renunciation of the action and one's agency in action as well:

> *tyāgaḥ kriyamāṇeṣveva vaidikeṣu karmasu phalaviṣayatayā, karmaviṣayatayā, kartṛtva-viṣayatayā ca pūrvameva hi mayā trividhaḥ saṃprakīrtitaḥ—karmajanyaṃ svargādikaṃ phalaṃ mama na syāditi phala-tyāgaḥ; madīyaphala-sādhanatayā madīyamidaṃ karmeti karmaṇi mamatāyāḥ parityāgaḥ karmaviṣayas*

[1] ibid., 18. 3.
[2] ibid., 3. 8. See discussion of this below.
[3] ibid., 5. 7.

tyāgaḥ; sarveśvare kartṛtvānusaṃdhānenātmanaḥ kartṛtā-tyāgaḥ kartṛtva-viṣayastyāgaḥ ॥[1]

Renunciation, even in the performance of Vedic karmas, is, as before, described by Me to be threefold: with reference to fruit, with reference to action, and with reference to doership—Renunciation of fruit is thinking, 'Let not the fruit which arises from *karman*—heavenly abode and the like—be mine'; renunciation with reference to *karman* is renunciation of 'my-ness' in *karman*, the thought that, 'This *karman* belongs to me by being the means to the fruit which is mine'; renunciation with reference to doership is renunciation of the notion of oneself being an agent (in an act) by reflection on the Lord of all as being the agent.

That which distinguishes Karmayoga from plain *karman* is its knowledge-aspect (*jñānākāra*). Mental renunciation of fruit, agency and the act itself is based on knowledge of the true nature of the individual *ātman*. This renunciation is developed in two stages:

(1) He who knows that the *ātman* is essentially distinct from *prakṛti* reflects that the *ātman's* agency in action is not peculiar to its own essential nature, but rather arises due to its conjunction with *prakṛti*. Acting without personal interest in action he will not be deceived into identifying *ātman* with *prakṛti*:

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 18. 4.

> Thus, he who knows the truth about the self should bear in mind, that is, constantly remember that the ear and other organs of sense, the organ of speech and other organs of action and the vital breaths operate of themselves in relation to their own objects. He should think, 'I do nothing'. The meaning is that he should think, 'To me who am solely of the nature of knowledge, this kind of agency which has been brought about by association with the senses and the vital breaths as a result of *karman*, has not arisen on account of my essential nature . . . While the *prakṛti* remains in the form of the senses, since the senses are particular modifications of the *prakṛti*, whoever . . . makes over (all) work to the Brahman (or the *prakṛti*), gives up attachment and engages himself in (varied) activities, thinking, "I do nothing at all"—such a person, even though he remains in contact with the *prakṛti*, is not stained by the sin which is the cause of bondage and which is of the form of considering the *prakṛti* (or the body) as the self.'[1]

(2) Such reflection gives way to an even more mature understanding of *karman*—knowing that the individual soul and *prakṛti* constitute the body of the Supreme Soul and are thereby activated by that Soul, one reflects that the agency in action and even the act

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 5. 8-10—Sampatkumaran, *The Gītābhāṣya*, pp. 147-8.

itself belong to the Supreme.[1] The *ātman* is *śeṣa* to the Lord, ensouled by Him and ruled by Him—in every act the Lord Himself is the agent. Further, the Lord as the soul of *prakṛti* is the Soul of every action—'All *karman* consists of Brahman by the fact of its *ātman* being Brahman'.[2] In *yajña* the Lord is the sacrificer, that which is sacrificed, and the object of sacrifice because he is the *ātman* of individual souls, of *prakṛti* and of the *deva-s*[3] to whom sacrifice is offered. Rāmānuja does not hesitate to say that the Lord in fact offers worship to Himself, the individual *ātman* being merely an instrument.[4] But such a statement must be tempered by his denial of complete determination as discussed above.[5]

Thus, the performance of *karman* becomes a recognition of the *ātman's śeṣa*-hood, its dependence upon the Lord. Every act is an offering to the Lord—an act of worship:

> *yad dehayātrāśeṣabhūtaṃ laukikaṃ karma karoṣi, yacca deha-dhāraṇāyāśnāsi, yacca vaidikaṃ homa-dāna-tapaḥ-prabhṛti nitya-naimittikaṃ karma karoṣi, tatsarvaṃ madarpaṇaṃ kuruṣva* । . . . *sarvasya laukikasya vaidikasya ca karmaṇaḥ kartṛtvaṃ bhoktṛtvam ārādhyatvaṃ ca yathā mayi samarpitaṃ*

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 4. 23; 3. 30-2; 18. 12.

[2] ibid., 4. 24—*sarvaṃ karma brahmātmakatayā brahmamayam.*

[3] The heavenly beings such as Indra and Agni, to whom Vedic sacrifice is offered.

[4] *Gītābhāṣya*, 3. 30.

[5] See Part I, Chapter I.

bhavati tathā kuru । etaduktaṃ bhavati—yāgadānādiṣu ārādhyatayā pratīyamānānāṃ devādīnāṃ karmakartur bhoktuḥ tava ca madīyatayā matsaṃkalpāyattasvarūpa-sthiti-pravṛttitayā ca mayyeva paramaśeṣiṇi parama-kartari tvāṃ ca kartāraṃ bhoktāram ārādhakam ārādhyaṃ ca devatājātam, ārādhanaṃ ca kriyājātam, sarvaṃ samarpaya; tava manniyāmyatāpūrvaka-maccheṣataikarasatām ārādhyādeścaitat-svabhāva-garbhatām atyarthaprītiyukto 'nusaṃdhatsveti ॥[1]

Whatever worldly *karman* necessary for support of the body you do, and whatever you eat in order to support the body, and whatever Vedic *karman*, daily and occasional, you do such as *homa*, *dāna* and *tapas*—perform all this as an offering to Me. Perform as if the doer, the enjoyer and the object of worship are offered up to Me. This is what is stated—since in *yāga-s*, *dāna-s* and the like, the *deva-s*, etc. who are recognized as the object of worship and you who are the doer and enjoyer of the act, belong to Me and their origin, maintenance and essential nature depend upon My will, offer up everything—yourself, the doer, enjoyer, and worshipper—the object of worship, the host of *deva-s*—the worship, the host of religious acts—to Me alone, the Supreme *Śeṣin*, the Supreme Actor; let your reflection, united with intense love, take rise from your having the one essence of being *śeṣa*

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 9. 27.

to Me based on rulership by Me, and from the object of worship and the like having the same nature.

Karmayoga purifies the *manas* in two ways: as worship, it pleases the Lord to the end that He wipes away or destroys the impurities—the impressions (*vāsana-s*) left upon the *manas* by past karma; and, as a mental renunciation of all connection of the *ātman* with acts, all 'selfishness' (*ahaṃkāra*) in action, it turns the *manas* away from sense-objects and the consequent misconception of *ātman* which leads to further bondage. This is the meaning of the Upaniṣadic 'childlikeness' (*bālya*)[1] for Rāmānuja.

While the immediate goal of Karmayoga is to purify the *manas* in preparation for a vision of the individual soul, its orientation is away from the soul and towards the Supreme Person. Bondage being what it is, the Supreme Person only can clear away the obstacles or mental impurities which obstruct a vision of the individual *ātman* within. Further, the final goal of the continuity of discipline of which Karmayoga is a part is not simply vision of the individual soul, but devotion to the Supreme Person.

The purpose of Karmayoga is to prepare the mental faculties for the yoga of meditation (Dhyānayoga). Following his initial description of Karmayoga (in his *Gītābhāṣya*), Rāmānuja discusses yet another yoga—not Dhyānayoga, but Jñānayoga. While he discusses

[1] See Part II, Chapter I, p. 49.

Jñānayoga as an alternative to or as a supplement to Karmayoga in preparing the mental faculties for Dhyānayoga, and while, in the last analysis, he does not recommend it to the *mumukṣu*, what he says about this yoga bears directly and very significantly on our central concern, namely, Rāmānuja's attitude toward and/or use of Patañjali's Yoga.

Whereas Karmayoga is a 'discipline of action,' Jñānayoga is an actionless, entirely mental or meditative discipline. It is based on the traditional idea of *saṃnyāsa* i.e. complete renunciation of the activity of the outer senses, and its primary aim is to focus the *manas* exclusively on the individual *ātman*. Jñānayoga has four stages of maturity:

1) retiring from the world of activity, taking up a seat and withdrawing the senses from contact with sense objects, focusing the *manas* on the *ātman*;[1]

2) cultivating indifference to that which pleases and that which does not please;[2]

3) becoming a *muni*, i.e. becoming one who practises reflection on the *ātman*, unagitated by feelings of love, fear, or anger;[3]

4) and finally, focusing the *manas* exclusively on the *ātman*, having completely abandoned desire for anything else:

> *manasā ātmaikāvalambanena tuṣṭas tena toṣeṇa tad-vyatiriktān sarvān manogatān kāmān yadā prakarṣeṇa*

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 2. 58. [2] ibid., 2. 57. [3] ibid., 2. 56.

jahāti, tadâyaṃ sthita-prajña ityucyate; jñānaniṣṭhā-kāṣṭheyam ॥[1]

When one is satisfied with the *manas* being occupied solely with *ātman* and, on account of that satisfaction, he abandons completely all the rest, namely all the mind—desires, then he is called *sthitaprajña* (he whose mind is firm or fixed); this is the highest stage of *jñānaniṣṭhā* (=*jñānayoga*).

This is as much of the nature of Jñānayoga as Rāmānuja describes. His comments on it are somewhat confusing to the reader, but this seems to be due more to the fact that he is commenting on the text of the *Bhagavadgītā* than to any indecision on his own part.

At the outset of his discussion of Jñānayoga, Rāmānuja states that Karmayoga gives way to Jñānayoga and Jñānayoga in turn leads to the yoga which has the form of seeing the individual *ātman*, i.e. Dhyānayoga:

śāstra-janyātmajñāna-pūrvaka-karmayogaḥ, sthita-prajñatākhya-jñānaniṣṭhām āpādayati; jñānaniṣṭhā-rūpā sthita-prajñatā tu yogākhyam ātmāvalokanaṃ sādhayati ।[2]

Karmayoga preceded by knowledge of the *ātman* derived from the scriptures brings one to firm adherence to knowledge (*jñānaniṣṭhā* or Jñānayoga) which is called *sthitaprajñatā*; and

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 2. 55. [2] ibid., 2. 53.

sthitaprajñatā which has the form of *jñānaniṣṭhā* effects the seeing of the *ātman* called Yoga.

Directly following this discussion he seems to indicate that the *mumukṣu* is to be a Karmayogin and a Jñānayogin at one and the same time.[1] Accordingly, an objection is raised—if Karmayoga involves the performance of action and Jñānayoga, the cessation of action, then the two cannot be engaged in simultaneously.[2] To this Rāmānuja says—'You misunderstood me; these are two different, alternative, paths; some are qualified for one, some for the other!'[3] But, then he says that one should not practise Jñānayoga without having first disciplined oneself in Karmayoga; for, if he does so, he will not only fail to reach his goal, but he will fall to permanent ruin.[4] Further, he says that total renunciation of action is, in fact, impossible—one must perform *karman* not only preparatory to Jñānayoga, but also in support of, along with, Jñānayoga.[5] Then follows[6] a long discussion of the fact that by the practice of Karmayoga alone one can prepare the mental faculties for Dhyānayoga—that one *need not* undertake Jñānayoga at all; indeed, that one *should not* practise Jñānayoga because of certain dangers inherent in this yoga. And, finally, he states that for the *ātman* conjoined with a body, Karmayoga is its only *dharma* or means; Jñānayoga is the *dharma* of the

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 2. 72.
[2] ibid., 3. 1.
[3] ibid., 3. 3.
[4] ibid., 3. 4-6.
[5] ibid., 3. 8.
[6] ibid., 3. 8f.

unembodied *ātman*[1]—only released souls can renounce all *karman*.[2]

We cannot say that Rāmānuja completely rules out the practice of Jñānayoga. Later comments in his *Gītābhāṣya* indicate that it is at least a theoretical possibility. For instance:

> *kecit niṣpannayogāḥ ātmani—śarīre avasthitam ātmānam ātmanā—manasā dhyānena—yogena paśyanti* । *anye ca aniṣpanna-yogāḥ, sāṃkhyena yogena—jñāna-yogena, yogayogyaṃ manaḥ kṛtvā ātmānaṃ paśyanti* । *apare—jñānayogānadhikāriṇaḥ, tadadhikāriṇaśca sukaropāya-saktāḥ, vyapadeśyāśca, karmayogenāntargata-jñānena manaso yogayogyatām āpādyātmānaṃ paśyanti* ॥[3]
>
> Those accomplished in Yoga, by *dhyāna* or Yoga, see the steady *ātman* in the body with the *manas*; others who are not accomplished in Yoga, having made the *manas* fit for Yoga by Jñānayoga, see the *ātman*; still others, those unqualified for Jñānayoga, those who are qualified for that but prefer the easier means, and those men of note, having trained the *manas* for fitness for Yoga by Karmayoga which includes knowledge, see the *ātman*.

However, we *can* say that he does not integrate Jñāna-yoga into his Means to Release. In his summary statements of the Means at the end of the *Gītābhāṣya*

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 3. 35. [2] ibid., 3. 17. [3] ibid., 13. 24.

he does not include Jñānayoga. There is no reference to Jñānayoga in his *Śrībhāṣya*, and the one reference to it in his *Vedārthasaṃgraha* is, as we have noted, in a quotation from Yāmuna.[1] To summarize Rāmānuja's Means to Release as Karmayoga-Jñānayoga-Bhakti-yoga, as most writers on Rāmānuja do, is misleading, if not incorrect.

But we are not so much concerned with the fact that Rāmānuja does not recommend Jñānayoga to the *mumukṣu* as we are with the reason(s) why he does not recommend it. The effectiveness of Jñānayoga is based on the complete control of the senses. However, Rāmānuja says, it is very difficult to control the senses. Even when the senses are turned away from sense-objects, a craving remains—this craving or passion for sense-objects does not cease except when one gains a vision of the *ātman* (*ātmadarśana*), and one cannot gain a vision of the *ātman* unless this passion has been conquered. Thus, it is exceedingly difficult (indeed, it would seem, impossible) to control the senses by Jñānayoga:

> *ātma-darśanena vinā viṣayarāgo na nivartate, anivṛtte viṣayarāge vipaścito yatamānasyāpi puruṣasyendriyāṇi pramāthīni balavanti manaḥ prasahya haranti | evam indriyajaya ātma-darśanādhīnaḥ, ātma-darśanam indriyajayādhīnam iti jñānaniṣṭhā duṣprāpā* ||[2]

[1] See Part II, Chapter I, p. 53.

[2] *Gītābhāṣya*, 2. 60.

> Without *ātmadarśana*, the passion for sense-objects does not cease; when the desire for the objects has not ceased, the impetuous, powerful senses violently carry away the *manas* of the man of discernment even while (he is) striving. Thus, the conquest of the senses depends upon *ātmadarśana*, *ātmadarṣana* depends on the conquest of the senses—hence, *jñānaniṣṭhā* is hard to attain.

The only means by which to surmount this apparently insurmountable difficulty is to focus the *manas* on the Supreme Person who is the perfect object (*śubhāśraya*):

> *asya sarvasya parijihīrṣayā viṣayānurāga-yuktatayā durjayānīndriyāṇi saṃyamya cetasaḥ śubhāśrayabhūte mayi mano'vasthāpya samāhita āsīta । manasi madviṣaye sati nirdagdhāśeṣa-kalmaṣatayā nirmalīkṛtaṃ viṣayānurāga-rahitaṃ mana indriyāṇi svavaśāni karoti । tato vaśyendriyaṃ mana ātmadarśanāya prabhavati । yathoktam—'yathâgnir uddhataśikhaḥ kakṣaṃ dahati sānilaḥ । tathā cittasthito viṣṇur yoginām sarvakilbiṣam' ॥[1] iti ।[2]*

> Restraining the senses which are difficult to conquer by reason of their being filled with attachment for sense-objects, let him sit concentrated, having placed the *manas* in Me (Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person) who is the perfect object of the *cetas* (thought); when the *manas* has Me as its object, the *manas*, purified by the burning

[1] *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, 6. 7. 74. [2] *Gītābhāṣya*, 2. 61.

> up of all impurities, free from passion for sense-objects, brings the senses under its own control; then the *manas*, the senses under control, becomes competent for *ātmadarśana*; thus it is stated: 'Just as the blazing fire, fanned by the wind, burns up dry wood, so Viṣṇu fixed in the *manas* of the yogin (burns up) all sin'[1].

If one does not fix the *manas* on the Supreme Person, if he attempts to control the senses 'by might of self-effort', he not only fails to attain his goal, but binds himself more firmly to the very sense-objects, attachment to which he is attempting to renounce:

> *evaṃ mayy aniveśya manaḥ svayatna-gauraveṇendriya-jaye pravṛtto vinaṣṭo bhavati. . . anirasta-viṣaya-ānurāgasya hi mayy aniveśita-manasa indriyāṇi saṃyamyāvasthitasyāpy anādipāpavāsanayā viṣaya-dhyānam avarjanīyaṃ syāt* |[2]
>
> Without having placed the *manas* in Me thus, he who attempts to conquer the senses by might of self-effort, he is ruined. . . . for he whose passion for sense objects has not gone away, whose *manas* is not entered into Me, even though he attempts restraining the senses, will not, due to the after-effects of beginningless sins, be able to abandon meditation on sense-objects.

Continued attachment to sense-objects leads to anger, anger to perplexity, perplexity to the loss of memory,

[1] *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, 6. 7. 74.
[2] *Gītābhāṣya*, 2. 62-3.

loss of memory to the destruction of the *buddhi*, etc., to decay in *saṃsāra*.[1]

Control of the senses not only requires that the *mumukṣu* focus his *manas* on the Supreme Person in meditation; it requires also that he practise Karmayoga as propaedeutic to such meditation. He who attempts to control the senses simply by renouncing all action is *destroyed* by his practice of Jñānayoga. If the after-effects of past deeds are not first removed by the grace of the Supreme Person (forthcoming to him who is engaged in Karmayoga), Jñānayoga leads to the *mumukṣu's* downfall:

> *na śāstrīyāṇāṃ karmaṇām anārambhādeva puruṣo naiṣkarmyaṃ—jñānaniṣṭhāṃ prāpnoti । na cārabdhasya śāstrīyasya tyāgāt । yato'nabhisaṃhita-phalasya parama-puruṣārādhana-veṣasya karmaṇaḥ siddhiḥ syāt; atas tena vinā tāṃ na prāpnoti ।*[2]
>
> Not by merely not starting actions which are prescribed in scripture, nor by abandoning those already begun, does a man obtain actionlessness, i.e. *jñānaniṣṭhā*; since this (*jñānaniṣṭhā*) is the result of *karman* performed as worship of the Supreme Person without attachment to the fruit; without this (*karman*) he does not obtain this (*jñānaniṣṭhā*).
>
> *avinaṣṭa-pāpatayā ajitāntaḥkaraṇaḥ ātmajñānāya pravṛtto viṣaya-pravaṇatayā ātmani vimukhīkṛtamanāḥ*

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 2. 62-3.
[2] ibid., 3. 4.

viṣayāneva smaran ya āste, anyathā saṃkalpya anyathā caratīti sa mithyācāra ucyate ātmajñānāyodyukto viparīto vinaṣṭo bhavatīty arthaḥ ॥ [1]

> He who sits pondering only sense-objects, his *manas* being absent from the *ātman* by being inclined toward the objects of sense, who strives for knowledge of the *ātman*, his inner organ not conquered since his sins are not destroyed—having intended one thing, he does another—he is called a hypocrite; striving for knowledge of the *ātman*, doing just the opposite, he is destroyed.

That which contaminates or binds the soul is not action; rather it is the desire from which action stems. Even if it were possible to renounce all action, one would not thereby rid oneself of desire. This is the root-difficulty for him who attempts Jñānayoga:

> Even the man who has the knowledge that the *śāstra-s* teach that the nature of the self, which is distinct from the *prakṛti*, is endowed with such qualities (as have already been mentioned) and that it, indeed, has to be always meditated upon—even such a person acts only with respect to material objects in conformity with his own nature, that is with the old subtle impressions (accompanying his soul from birth to birth). . . . An unavoidable attachment has been established for the organs. . . towards their

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 3. 6.

> objects. . . in the form of a desire to enjoy these objects. . . And when their enjoyment is obstructed, an unavoidable aversion is established. Thus these two bring under their control the man who strives towards Jñānayoga and who has subdued all his senses (forcibly and for the time being) and violently direct him towards their own activities. And then this person, losing interest in the experience of the self, becomes completely lost. Let not one, by undertaking Jñānayoga, come under the power of attachment and aversion, and perish . . . . Therefore, Karmayoga, which, on account of its being easy to do, constitutes one's own duty, and which, though defective, is free from the liability to interruption, is better than Jñānayoga, which, though carried out in all its details, that is, practised for a short time, constitutes another's duty on account of its being difficult to do for one having contact with the *prakṛti* and is liable to interruption. For a person who remains in Karmayoga, which has become his duty on account of its fitness to be practised by him, even death without success in one birth is to be preferred.[1]

Furthermore, if one renounces all action, he will not even be able to sustain the body; for the body of the *mumukṣu* must be sustained only by pure food, and pure

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 3. 33-5; Sampatkumaran, pp. 103-5.

food results only from the performance of prescribed *karman-s*:

> *yadi sarvaṃ karma parityajya kevalaṃ jñāna-niṣṭhāyām adhikaroṣi, tarhy akarmaṇaste jñāna-niṣṭhasya jñānaniṣṭhopakāriṇī śarīrayātrâpi na setsyati । yāvatsādhana-samāpti śarīra-dhāraṇaṃ cāvaśyaṃ kāryam । . . . mahāyajñādikaṃ kṛtvā tac-chiṣṭāśanenaiva śarīra-dhāraṇaṃ kāryam ।* [1]
>
> If, having abandoned all *karman*, you engage in the *jñānaniṣṭhā* alone, then you will not even be able to maintain the body which is of service in *jñānaniṣṭhā*; maintenance of the body has necessarily to be done until the means is concluded; having performed the Mahāyajña-s, etc. . . . support of the body is to be made by partaking of the food which remains from these.

He who aspires to release must in every way rely upon the Supreme Person—he must purify his *manas* preparatory to meditation by the performance of scripturally prescribed acts as worship of the Supreme Person; he must focus the *manas* on the Supreme Person in meditation itself; and he must continue to perform acts of worship in support of this meditation. The yogin who relies entirely upon his own strength cannot gain a vision of the *ātman* within:

> *matprapatti-pūrvakaṃ karmayogādiṣu yatamānās tair nirmalāntaḥkaraṇā yogino yogākhyena cakṣuṣā*

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 3. 8.

ātmani—śarīre 'vasthitamapi śarīrād viviktaṃ svena rūpeṇâvasthitam enaṃ paśyanti । yatamānā apy akṛtātmānaḥ—matprapatti-virahiṇaḥ tata evāsaṃskṛta-manasaḥ tata evācetasaḥ—ātmāvalokana-samartha-cetorahitāḥ—nainaṃ paśyanti ॥[1]

Yogin-s, striving in Karmayoga, etc. preceded by resort to Me, with the inner organ purified by these, see him who, though dwelling in the *ātman*, i.e. in the body, is dwelling in his own form, separate from the body, with the eye called Yoga. Even though striving, those whose *ātman* is unperfected, i.e. those who are without resort to Me, those whose *manas* is not purified, those who are fools—they are without the *manas* fit for seeing the *ātman*; they do not see him.

The strictures that Rāmānuja applies to Jñānayoga apply also to Patañjali's Yoga. In spite of the *Īśvara*-element in Patañjali's system, his Yoga is basically a way of conquering the senses by self-effort, based on the traditional idea of *saṃnyāsa*. And, indeed, we shall see that Rāmānuja qualifies his Patañjalian type of Yoga precisely along the lines of his strictures against Jñānayoga.

In view of the dangers involved in Jñānayoga, Rāmānuja concludes that Karmayoga alone should be performed preparatory to Dhyānayoga. Due to its 'knowledge-aspect', Karmayoga by itself is capable of preparing the mental faculties for meditation, and,

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 15. 11.

it is easier to perform and without danger, because action is natural to the embodied soul:

> *yato jñāna-niṣṭhasyāpi dhriyamāṇa-śarīrasya yāvat-sādhanasamāpti mahāyajñādi nitya-naimittikaṃ karmāvaśyaṃ kartavyam; yataśca karmayoge-'pyātmano 'kartṛtva-bhāvanayâtmayāthātmyānusaṃ-dhānam antarbhūtam; yataśca prakṛtisaṃsṛṣṭasya karmayogaḥ suśako'pramādaśca; ato jñānaniṣṭhā-yogyasyāpi jñānayogāt karmayogo jyāyān itasmāt tvaṃ karmayogameva kurvity abhiprāyaḥ* ||[1]
>
> Since, even by the one devoted to knowledge who has to maintain his body, daily and occasional karmas like the Mahāyajñā-s are necessarily to be performed until the conclusion of the means; and since, even in the Karmayoga, contemplation of the true nature of the *ātman* is included due to the conception of the *ātman* as non-doer; and since Karmayoga, by the fact of conjunction with *prakṛti*, is easy and without danger—therefore, Karmayoga is superior to Jñānayoga even for one who is qualified for firm adherence to knowledge (*jñānaniṣṭhā*). The sense (of the passage) is: therefore, perform only Karmayoga.

As stated, it is not action itself which contaminates and binds; rather, it is desire—selfish interest in action. Renouncing the desire for fruits, renouncing one's

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 3. 8.

agency in action, renouncing all selfish interest in the act itself—offering act, agency and fruit up to the Supreme Person—while yet acting, the senses are subdued, knowledge becomes firm and the *manas* is purified. The *manas* which is filled with desire for fruit, etc. is agitated by the activity of the senses; but the *manas* which is without desire is undisturbed though the senses continue to function normally—the senses are as subdued while acting as if they had been completely withdrawn, and the *manas*, engaged in that which is natural and familiar, is easily brought to focus on the *ātman* within:

> *karmaphalaṃ—svargādikam anāśritaḥ kāryaṃ—karmānuṣṭhānam eva kāryaṃ, sarvātmanâsmatsuhṛdbhūta-paramapuruṣārādhana-rūpatayā karmaiva mama prayojanaṃ na tatsādhyaṃ kiṃciditi yaḥ karma karoti, sa saṃnyāsī ca, jñānayoga-niṣṭhaśca; yogī ca, karmayoganiṣṭhaśca; ātmāvalokana-rūpayogasādhana-bhūtobhayaniṣṭha ityarthaḥ; na niragnir nacākriyaḥ —na coditayajñādi-karmasv apravṛttaḥ; na ca kevalajñāna-niṣṭhaḥ; tasya hi jñāna-niṣṭhaiva, karmayoga-niṣṭhasya tūbhayam astīty abhiprāyaḥ* ॥[1]
>
> Not interested in the fruit of *karman*, *svarga* and the like, he who performs *karman* thinking, 'The performance of *karman* has to be done; *karman*, indeed, by its having the form of worship of the Supreme Person who is our friend completely (wholeheartedly), is my

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 6.1.

purpose—not anything which is to be obtained by it'; he who performs *karman* thus, he is both a *saṃnyāsin*, i.e. one devoted to Jñānayoga, and a yogin, i.e. one devoted to Karmayoga; he is attached to both as the means to Yoga which has the form of seeing the *ātman*; not he who tends no fires and does no acts, i.e. he who does not engage himself in *karman* such as *yajña* which is prescribed; not he who is devoted to knowledge alone; for, *jñānaniṣṭhā* alone is his, but both belong to him who is devoted to Karmayoga. This is the sense (of the text).

yaṃ saṃnyāsa iti, jñānayoga iti ātmayāthātmya-jñānamiti prāhuḥ taṃ karmayogameva viddhi: tadupapādayati—na hy asaṃnyasta-saṃkalpo yogī bhavati kaścaneti। ātmayāthātmyānusaṃdhānena anātmani prakṛtāvātma-saṃkalpaḥ saṃnyastaḥ yena sa saṃnyasta-saṃkalpaḥ ।[1]

What is called *saṃnyāsa*, i.e. Jñānayoga, knowledge of the true nature of the *ātman*, know that only as Karmayoga; this is established by, 'For not without renouncing desire does anyone become a yogin'; he by whom the seeing of the *ātman* in what is not *ātman*, i.e. *prakṛti*, is renounced by reflection on the true nature of the *ātman*, he is one whose desire is renounced.

Rāmānuja's ethic is one of engagement rather than physical withdrawal—he says that one should

[1] ibid., 6. 2.

not renounce activity—one need not and, indeed, one cannot. The *mumukṣu* should continue to engage in those pursuits which contribute to the maintenance of the body and of society, but with *mental* renunciation. It is not the body or sense-objects which bind the *ātman*; rather, it is selfish attachment to body and sense-objects. What is necessary is to renounce attachment to the physical world, not the physical world itself. A point which Rāmānuja makes in another context,[1] but which must be assumed to be implicit in his thinking with respect to *karman* and renunciation, is that the physical world is a manifestation of the Supreme Person—real, not illusory—and that souls are bound to physical bodies in order that they may perform the needful with a view to release. The physical body and the things of the material world are given by the Lord as instruments by which the soul may worship Him and thereby obtain release. It is in and through the world that the *ātman* comes to obtain divine grace toward release. In accordance with this view, Rāmānuja affirms that one may pursue and attain to release in any one of the four states of being or stages of life (*āśrama-s*)—one need not undertake *saṃnyāsa*.[2] Pursuing release as a householder is easy and without the dangers involved in an attempt to renounce all activity; it is the natural state of an embodied soul and, for Rāmānuja, it is the preferred state.

[1] See Part I, Chapter IV.
[2] *Śrībhāṣya*, 3. 4. 17-20.

CHAPTER IV

BHAKTIYOGA

A. Dhyānayoga

> 'One for whom the darkness concealing the innermost self has been destroyed by the grace of the supremely compassionate Supreme Person. . . .'

The goal of the first phase of Bhaktiyoga is a vision of one's own self—the individual *ātman*:

> *uktaḥ karmayogaḥ saparikaraḥ; idānīṃ jñānayoga-karmayoga-sādhyātmāvalokana-rūpayogābhyāsa-vidhirucyate* |[1]
>
> Karmayoga with its attending factors has been expounded; now the manner of the practice of the Yoga, which has the form of seeing the *ātman* which is effected by Jñānayoga and Karmayoga, is stated.

As we have seen, according to Rāmānuja, scripture states that a vision of the individual *ātman* is propaedeutic to the higher meditation (*paravidyā*)—meditation on the Supreme Person.

Dhyānayoga is a yoga of 'ceasing the action of all the senses'. Rāmānuja does not reject yoga which

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 6. 1.

is based on control of the senses; on the contrary, he prescribes it. The practice of such a yoga is absolutely necessary to the attainment of release. What he finds unacceptable—not simply because it is ineffective but because it is detrimental to one's spiritual progress—is any attempt to control the senses for meditation by self-mastery, completely aside from recognition of and reliance upon the Supreme Person.

> *phalādiṣv asaktabuddhiḥ, jitamanāḥ paramapuruṣa-kartṛtvānusaṃdhānenātmakartṛtve vigata-spṛhaḥ, evaṃ . . . karma kurvan paramāṃ naiṣkarmyasiddhim adhigacchati—paramāṃ dhyāna-niṣṭhāṃ jñānayoga-syāpi phalabhūtām adhigacchatītyarthaḥ । vakṣyamāṇa-dhyānayogāvāptiṃ sarvendriya-karmoparatirūpām adhi-gacchati ॥*[1]
>
> The *buddhi* unattached to fruit, etc., the *manas* conquered, desire in agency of self gone by reflecting on the agency of the Supreme Person—performing *karman* thus, he acquires the supreme perfection of actionlessness, i.e. he acquires that supreme devotion to *dhyāna* which is also the fruit of Jñānayoga, i.e. he gains Dhyānayoga about to be described, which has the form of ceasing the action of all senses.

When the Karmayogin has practised non-attachment to the objects of sense (*viṣayānanuṣaṅga*) to the extent that the *manas* is no longer agitated by these objects[2]; when

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 18. 49.
[2] ibid., 6. 4-5.

he becomes indifferent to cold and heat, pleasure and pain, honour and disgrace, looking upon clods and gold as of the same value, considering that he has nothing to gain or lose from friend or foe[1]—his *manas* firmly fixed on *ātman* alone—then he is fit for the practice of Yoga.[2] At a fixed time each day, he should retire, alone, to a clean, sequestered spot, prepare a proper seat and assume an erect posture thereon. Fixing the gaze on the tip of the nose and equalizing the breaths,[3] he should check the activity of the senses and the *citta* (*yatacittendriyakriyaḥ*) by making the *manas* one-pointed (*yogaikāgraṃ manaḥ kṛtvā*).[4]

> *bāhyān viṣaya-sparśān bahiḥ kṛtvā—bāhyendriya-vyāpāraṃ sarvam upasaṃhṛtya yogayogyāsane ṛjukāya upaviśya cakṣuṣī bhruvor antare—nāsāgre vinyasya nāsābhyantara-cāriṇau prāṇāpānau samau kṛtvā—ucchvāsa-niḥśvāsau samagatī kṛtvā ātmāvalokanād anyatra pravṛttyanarhendriya-manobuddhiḥ. . . .* |[5]
>
> Having excluded the outward desires for objects, i.e. having completely stopped the functioning of the outward senses, sitting with the body straight in a posture (*āsana*) proper to Yoga, fixing the sight between the eyebrows, i.e. fixing it on the tip of the nose, having equalized the inhalatory and exhalatory breaths circulating in the nose, the *buddhi*, *manas* and senses incapable

[1] ibid., 6. 7-9. [2] ibid., 6. 18.
[3] Inhalatory and exhalatory; thus, the plural is used.
[4] *Gītābhāṣya*, 6. 10-12. [5] ibid., 5. 27-8.

of functioning except toward the seeing of the *ātman*. . .

The *manas* is to be made one-pointed (*ekāgra*) by focussing or fixing it on the Supreme Person and Him alone:

> *māmeva cintayann āsīta* ||
> *evaṃ mayi parasmin brahmaṇi puruṣottame manasaḥ śubhāśraye sadā ātmānaṃ mano yuñjan niyata-mānasaḥ matsparśa-pavitrīkṛta-mānasatayā niścala-mānasaḥ . . . mayi saṃsthitāṃ śāntim adhigacchati* ||[1]
>
> Let him sit, thinking on Me alone.
> Ever uniting the *manas* in Me, the Supreme Brahman, the highest Person, the perfect object of the *manas*—the *manas* controlled, i.e. the *manas* made steady by its being purified through contact with Me, he goes to the peace which is abiding in Me.

Concentration of the *manas* on the Supreme Person is called *dhāraṇā*:

> *yogākhyāṃ dhāraṇām āsthitaḥ—mayyeva niścalāṃ sthitim āsthitaḥ*. . . .[2]
>
> Established in *dhāraṇā* called Yoga—i.e. established in motionless fixture on Me alone. . .

From the above we see that Dhyānayoga involves proper seating (*āsana*), breath-control (*prāṇāyāma*), withdrawal of the senses from the objects of sense (*pratyāhāra*), and concentration of the *manas* on one object (*dhāraṇā*).

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 6. 14, end; 6. 15.
[2] ibid., 18. 12-13.

And we see, that the aim of such practices is to stop or suppress the normal thought-processes—normal consciousness. Rāmānuja says nothing more of seating, breath-control and withdrawal of the senses than is indicated above, except to emphasize that a sitting position is absolutely necessary:

> Meditation is to be carried on by the devotee in a sitting posture, since in that posture only the needful concentration of mind (*ekāgracittatā*) can be reached. Standing and walking demand effort, and lying down is conducive to sleep. The proper posture is sitting on some support, so that no effort may be required for holding the body up.[1]

Lacking further definition of these stages, we must conclude that they are basically the same as those prescribed by Patañjali. It is *dhāraṇā* with which Rāmānuja is most concerned.

In *dhāraṇā* the *manas* is to be made one-pointed—it is to be completely withdrawn from normal functioning—by focussing it exclusively on one object. And Rāmānuja stresses that this object is to be the Supreme Person and Him only; He is the perfect object (*śubhāśraya*). Rāmānuja's major text in this matter is *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, Book 6, chapter 7, which, in the course of outlining an eight-member Yoga as the Means to Release, discusses at length the fit or perfect object in the stage of *dhāraṇā*. We have already noted the key

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 4. 1. 7; Thibaut, p. 720.

verse from this chapter of the Purāṇa in his comments on Jñānayoga:

> Just as the blazing fire, fanned by the wind, burns up dry wood, so Viṣṇu fixed in the *manas* of the yogin (burns up) all sin.[1]

Rāmānuja gives several reasons why the Supreme Person only should be the object in *dhāraṇā*. If the *manas* is to be purified, its object must itself be pure and it must be capable of purifying.[2] Rāmānuja discusses at length the section of chapter 7 of the Purāṇa which deals with the object in *dhāraṇā* in his *Śrībhāṣya*.[3] He says that the Purāṇa states that Brahman only, by being the essence of purity—without any trace of imperfection and possessed of all auspicious qualities[4] —is fit to be the object. That which is the effect of Brahman—the material universe and individual souls —is impure due to its implication in *saṃsāra* and is therefore unfit. Even the released soul is unfit to be the object, since its purity is not essential to it—it being dependent upon that of the Supreme Soul. In his comments on *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1. 3. 3-14[5] Rāmānuja develops the point that the Supreme Person only is *capable* of purifying the *manas*. Here he says that he who desires to control the *manas* must first 'control'

[1] *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, 6. 7. 74.

[2] '*śubha*' has both the meaning 'fit' or 'pure' and 'capable'; see Monier-Williams, Dictionary, op. cit., p. 1083.

[3] 1. 1. 1; Thibaut, p. 89f.

[4] *heyapratyanīka-kalyāṇaguṇagaṇam.*

[5] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 4. 6.

(*vaśīkṛ*) i.e. get the help of, the Supreme Brāhman who is the Inner Ruler (*antaryāmin*) and Consenter (*anumantṛ*). He says:

> The section (of the Upaniṣad) beginning, 'Know the Self to be him who drives in the chariot', and ending, 'The wise say the path is hard', teaches the true mode of meditation, and how the devotee reaches the highest abode of Viṣṇu.[1]

The individual soul is to be viewed as the master of a chariot; the body, as the chariot; the *buddhi*, as the charioteer; the *manas* as the reins, etc. The Inner Ruler, having become the object of meditation, enables the individual soul to control the *buddhi*; the *buddhi* controls the *manas* and the *manas*, the body and outward senses (the horses).

> ... the activities of all the beings enumerated depend on the wishes of that highest Self. As the universal inner Ruler that Self brings about the meditation of the devotee also; for the *sūtra* (2. 3. 41) expressly declares that the activity of the individual soul depends on the Supreme Person. Being the means for bringing about the meditation and the goal of meditation, that same Self is the highest object to be attained.[2]

Thus, the Supreme Person is not only the appropriate object, but is also the necessary object in that He alone is in a position to purify the *manas*.

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 4. 6; Thibaut, p. 363.
[2] ibid., 1. 4. 1; Thibaut, p. 356.

A further reason for taking the Supreme Person as the object in *dhāraṇā* is stated in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 3. 14—'According to what his thought is in this world, so will he be when he has departed this life'.[1] Rāmānuja takes this to mean—'As is his meditation, just so does he obtain'.[2] Thus, he who desires to obtain Brahman must meditate only on Brahman. He who meditates on sense-objects or mental concepts such as *manas*, breath (*prāṇa*) or sound (*śabda*), as themselves or even as symbols (*pratīka*) of Brahman, cannot attain Brahman. This is both because such objects have no power to take the meditator beyond themselves (only divine power can purify the *manas*) and because the final end to be gained is not Brahman as an abstract principle, but Brahman as Supreme Person.[3] Every stage in Yoga must serve the final end in view. We see that the aim of the first four stages of Rāmānuja's Yoga is basically the same as that of the first four stages of Patañjali's Yoga, namely, the suppression of normal consciousness—the cessation of the functioning of the *manas* with respect to sense-objects. However, this aim is to be accomplished, not with a view to eventually suppressing *all* states of consciousness, but with a view to meditation—remembrance on the Supreme Person. Granted that the immediate goal of Dhyānayoga is *ātma-darśana*, this vision is only propaedeutic to remembrance.

[1] *yathākraturasmin loke puruṣo bhavati tathetaḥ pretya bhavati*—quoted by Rāmānuja in *Śrībhāṣya*, 4. 3. 14.

[2] *tathopāsīnas tathaiva prāpnoti*—ibid.

[3] ibid.

Jha Kendriya Sanskrit Vidya

The mind (*buddhi*, *citta* and *manas*) is to be turned away from sense-objects in order that it may be turned *toward* the Supreme Person, not in order that its function may be totally suppressed. *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, 6. 7, as we have it and evidently as Rāmānuja had it, is the product of several writers—representatives of different schools of thought.[1] Herein, it is first stated that the object in *dhāraṇā* is to be Viṣṇu in all his splendour—Viṣṇu as the Supreme *Person*, and that such a being continues to be the object in *dhyāna*. Later, it is stated that meditation on Viṣṇu is to become more and more abstract until the yogin is concentrated on a one-limbed Viṣṇu, and finally until a completely objectless state is attained—a state of absolute oneness.[2] Rāmānuja makes no direct comment on this Advaitic turn of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* text, but that he is aware of it is shown by the fact that in discussing the text he emphasizes that the object of meditation and the final end to be attained through meditation is only Brahman with attributes (*saguṇa*):

> *paravidyāsu sarvāsu saguṇameva brahmopāsyaṃ phalaṃ caikarūpameva. . .*[3]

[1] See Van Buitenen, 'The Śubhāśraya Prakaraṇa (*Viṣṇupurāṇa*, 6. 7) and the Meaning of Bhāvanā', *The Adyar Library Bulletin* (Madras: Adyar Library and Research Centre, May 1955), XIX. 1-2, p. 3f.

[2] I rely on: *Vishnupuranam*, ed. by Manmatha Nath Dutt (Calcutta: H.C. Dass, 1896); and *The Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, tr. with notes by H. H. Wilson (London: Trübner & Co., 1870), Vol. 5.

[3] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1; text, p. 83.

> That which is to be meditated upon in all of the higher meditations is only Brahman possessed of attributes, and the same is the fruit in all the meditations.

So far, it has been shown that through the *dhāraṇā*-stage Rāmānuja's Yoga is basically the same as Patañjali's, with the important exception that, in order to make the *manas* one-pointed, the Supreme Person only is to be its object. It has also been shown that one reason why the Supreme Person is to be the object in *dhāraṇā* is that, in what follows *dhāraṇā*, Rāmānuja's Yoga *radically* differs from Patañjali's.

When the *manas* has been purified and controlled by its ' contact ' with the Supreme Person, it perceives the *ātman* as it is in itself. The *ātman* shines before the *manas* in the light of knowledge:

> *nivātasthatayā niścala-saprabha-dīpavan nivṛtta-sakaletara-manovṛttitayā niścalo jñānaprabha ātmā tiṣṭhati* |[1]
>
> By the fact of the activity of the *manas* having altogether ceased, the *ātman* stands motionless in the light of knowledge like a lamp shining without flicker by the fact of standing in a windless place.

Rāmānuja states only that the *ātman* is perceived by the *manas*:

> *yoge ātmanā—manasā ātmānaṃ paśyan. . .*[2]

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 6. 19. [2] ibid., 6. 20.

> In Yoga, he sees the *ātman* with the *ātman*, i.e. with the *manas*.

But it would seem that we must understand that the *ātman* perceives itself through the instrumentality of the *manas*; that the state of *ātmadarśana* is one of self-consciousness. We have seen that the *ātman* mistakes itself for what is not itself due to the fact that the *manas* is contaminated by the after-effects of past karma and that it is agitated by sense-objects—the *ātman's* capacity to know is limited through the instrumentality of the *manas*.[1] Therefore, we must infer that, when the impurities of the *manas* have been removed and it is calmed (by means of Karmayoga and Dhyānayoga), the *ātman* sees itself in the light of its own unlimited knowledge. The *ātman* is the knower (*jñātṛ*), not the *manas*.[2]

However this may be, the important point to note about *ātmadarśana* is that the *ātman* is perceived not only as distinct from *prakṛti*, but also as *śeṣa* to the Supreme Person. The *ātman* is seen as ensouled by and ruled by the Highest Brahman:

> *evaṃbhūto dhyānayogaṃ kurvan brahmabhūyāya kalpate—brahmabhāvāya kalpate, sarvabandha-vinirmukto yathāvasthitam ātmānam anubhavati* ||
> *brahmabhūtaḥ—āvirbhūtāparicchinna - jñānaikākāra - maccheṣataika-svabhāvātma-svarūpaḥ, itas tvanyāṃ prakṛtiṃ viddhi me parām iti hi svaśeṣatoktā, prasannātmā—kleśa-karmādibhir akaluṣasvarūpo madvyatiriktaṃ*

[1] See Part II, chapter II.
[2] See Part I, chapter I.

na kaṃcana bhūta-viśeṣaṃ prati śocati, na kiṃcana kāṅkṣati, apitu madvyatirikteṣu sarveṣu bhūteṣu anādaraṇīyatāyāṃ samo nikhilaṃ vastujātaṃ tṛṇa-van-manyamāno madbhaktiṃ labhate parāṃ—mayi sarveśvare nikhilajagad-udaya-vibhava-layalīle . . . atyartha-priyānubhavarūpāṃ bhaktiṃ labhate ॥ [1]

Performing Dhyānayoga in this way, he is fit to become Brahman, i.e. he is fit for the state of Brahman; freed from all bonds, he experiences the *ātman* as it is in itself. Having become Brahman, i.e. the essential nature of the *ātman* as having the one essential characteristic of being *śeṣa* to Me and being of the sole form of unlimited knowledge that had been manifested —for the being a *seṣa* was stated in, 'But know My other nature, higher than that. . .'— the *ātman* serene, i.e. the essential nature unsullied by acts of pain, etc., he has no grief toward any being other than Me; nor does he long for anything. Alike toward all beings in his indifference, except towards Me, not caring a straw for any being or thing, he attains the higher *bhakti* to Me, i.e. he obtains *bhakti* which has the form of experience of intense love toward Me, the Lord of all, whose sport is of the form of the origin, manifestation and destruction of the entire universe. . .

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 18. 53 end; 18. 54.

The fact that the individual *ātman* is *śeṣa* to the Supreme Ātman informs Rāmānuja's entire Means to Release. We have seen that knowing this fact is the basis for Karmayoga. Now we see that the realization of this fact is the link between *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna* in Yoga. A vision of the individual *ātman* as *śeṣa* gives rise to higher devotion (*parabhakti*) toward the Supreme Person (the 'lower' devotion being that expressed in Karmayoga and Dhyānayoga) and such devotion gives rise to meditation on this Person.

Rāmānuja distinguishes four stages of maturity in the vision of the *ātman*: (1) after having seen the *ātman* as distinct from *prakṛti*, one sees that all individual souls have the same essential nature as one's own, i. e. that individual souls are all alike when viewed distinct from *prakṛti*; he sees that to know one *ātman* is to know all *ātman*. This understanding is called '*sarvatra samadarśana*', 'seeing sameness everywhere'.[1] (2) One who perceives this will further see the sameness or equality (*sāmyam*) of individual *ātman* and Supreme Ātman:

> *tato 'pi vipāka-daśāpanno mama sādharmyam upāgataḥ . . . sarvasyātmavastuno vidhūta-puṇyapāpasya svarūpeṇâvasthitasya matsāmyaṃ paśyan . . . tasya svātma-svarūpaṃ paśyato'haṃ tatsāmyān na praṇaśyāmi nādarśanam upayāmi, mamāpi māṃ paśyato matsāmyāt svātmānaṃ matsamam avalokayan sadā darśanam upayāmi* ||[2]

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 6. 29. [2] ibid., 6. 30.

> Then, having attained an even (greater) state of maturity, having attained the sameness of nature to Me. . . he sees the equality of all *ātma*-nature with Me when it is viewed in its essential nature free from good and evil (karma); . . . To him who sees the nature of his own *ātman*, I am not lost, i.e. I do not disappear from (his) sight; for My nature is the same as his. And because he who sees Me is identical with Me, he who looks upon his own self as identical with Me, does not disappear from My sight.

The yogin who sees the *ātman* inevitably sees the Lord as well, and having seen Him, the Lord remains ever before his vision. (3) Such a vision matures into seeing the Lord as abiding everywhere at all times. Whether one is in deep meditation or engaged in activity, he sees nothing but the Lord where previously he had perceived the differences of the material world.[1] (4) The most mature stage of the vision is attained when one, knowing the sameness of all souls and their distinctness from *prakṛti*, comes to complete indifference to the joys and sorrows which afflict material bodies.[2] The last two stages appear to be, in inverse order, the practical application of the first two. I do not see that Rāmānuja integrates these stages of maturity with the rest of his Yoga. He does not associate the fact that the yogin who sees his *ātman* also sees the

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 6. 31. [2] ibid., 6. 32.

Supreme *Ātman* with the fact that the yogin sees the *ātman* as *śeṣa*; and he does not indicate what the function of these stages of vision is in his continuity of yogic discipline.

Rāmānuja gives every indication (and none to the contrary) that *ātmadarśana* is the direct result of *dhāraṇā*. I do not see why Rāmānuja would differ from Patañjali on this point. It is possible that *ātmadarśana* should be considered comparable to Patañjali's *samādhi*. To my knowledge, Rāmānuja makes only one comment on *samādhi* and this purely incidental to a discussion of whether it is the *ātman* or *prakṛti* that is the agent in action:

> *buddheḥ kartṛtve mokṣa-sādhanabhūta-samādhāvapi saiva kartrī syāt | sa ca samādhiḥ prakṛter anyo-'smītyevaṃrūpaḥ; na ca prakṛter anyo 'smīti prakṛtiḥ samādhātum alam | ato 'py ātmaiva kartā ||*[1]
>
> If the *buddhi* were the agent, it would be so even in *samādhi* which is the means to release. And that *samādhi* has the form, 'I am other than *prakṛti*'; and *prakṛti* cannot form the conception, 'I am other than *prakṛti*'. Therefore, only the *ātman* is the agent.

This statement does support an understanding of *ātmadarśana* as *samādhi*. However, if we conclude that *ātmadarśana* is comparable to *samādhi*, we must reconcile this conclusion with the fact that the *dhyāna* which

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 2. 3. 38.

follows *ātmadarśana* in Rāmānuja's Yoga is identified with Patañjali's Yoga and therefore, would presumably follow upon *dhāraṇā*; with the fact that Rāmānuja says nothing of a *dhyāna* which would follow upon *dhāraṇā* and precede *ātmadarśana*; and with the fact that Rāmānuja allows for *kaivalya* (the goal of Patañjali's Yoga) but does not consider that *ātmadarśana* is this *kaivalya*. If we conclude that *ātmadarśana* is *samādhi*, then we must conclude that Rāmānuja's *dhyāna* is a meditation above and beyond the ordinary eight-stage yoga. We shall raise the question again in our discussion of *kaivalya*, but this is more intelligently discussed after we have examined the higher meditation (*paravidyā*).

B. *Paravidyā*

> 'That Supreme Person who is the Highest Brahman is to be otbained only by devotion which has the form of meditation which seeks no other object, is incessant, extremely dear and has reached a state of most vivid perception . . .'

A vision of the individual *ātman* as distinct from *prakṛti* and as *śeṣa* to the Supreme Person gives rise to the higher devotion:

> *yatamanaskaḥ | tato 'nabhisaṃhita-phalena madārādhana-rūpeṇānuuṣṭhitena karmaṇā siddhenātmadhyānena nivṛttāvidyādi-sarvatirodhāne maccheṣataikasvarūpe pratyagātmani sākṣātkṛte sati mayi parā bhaktiḥ svayam evotpadyate ||*[1]

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 12. 11.

> With the *manas* controlled, when one has direct vision of the individual *ātman* the essential nature of which is only as *śeṣa* to Me, all obstacles like *avidyā* having been removed by *ātma*-meditation which is effected by *karman* performed as worship of Me without attachment for the fruit, the higher devotion toward Me is produced just of itself (naturally).

And, the higher devotion gives rise to the higher meditation, meditation on the Supreme Person. In *ātmadarśana* the yogin realizes that he is essentially dependent upon the Supreme Person, the Inner Ruler; that this Person is worthy of devotion; indeed, that this Person is the highest goal to be attained and the only means by which to attain. Realizing all this, he can do no other than turn his *manas* entirely toward this Supreme Person:

> *vāsudeva-śeṣataikaraso'haṃ tadāyatta-svarūpasthiti-pravṛttiśca, sa cāsaṃkhyeyaiḥ kalyāṇa-guṇagaṇaiḥ paratara iti jñānavān bhūtvā vāsudeva eva mama parama-prāpyaṃ prāpakaṃ ca anyadapi yanmanorathavarti sa eva mama tatsarvam iti māṃ prapadyate—mām upāste.*[1]

> Having become a man of knowledge thinking, 'I am of the one essence of being a *śeṣa* to Vāsudeva (the Supreme Person), and my actions, maintenance and essential nature depend on

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 7. 19.

Him—He is most supreme by His countless auspicious attributes'; then, he resorts to Me, i.e. he meditates on Me, thinking, 'Vāsudeva alone is my highest goal and means; whatsoever abides in the heart, He is all that to me'.

Meditation (*dhyāna, upāsana*) is to have the form of remembrance (*smṛti*), reflection on the qualities of the Supreme Person, a continuous stream of thought directed toward the Lord; it is being 'Me-minded, My *bhakta*' (*manmanā bhava mad-bhaktaḥ*)[1]:

> *vedana-dhyānopāsanādi-śabdavācyaṃ darśana-samānākāraṃ smṛtisaṃtānam atyarthapriyam iha manmanā bhaveti vidhīyate* |[2]

Here, 'Be Me-minded', denotes what is spoken by words such as *vedana, dhyāna* and *upāsana*, intense love, continuous remembrance which has a form similar to direct vision.

> *manmanā bhava—mayi sarveśvareśvare nikhilaheyapratyanīka-kalyāṇaikatāne sarvajñe satya-saṃkalpe nikhila-jagadekakāraṇe parasmin brahmaṇi puruṣottame . . . tailadhārāvad avicchedena niviṣṭamanā bhava* |[3]

Let thy *manas* be ceaselessly fixed, like the continuous flow of oil, on Me, the Lord of the lord of all, the sole abode of auspicious qualities, completely without imperfections, all-knowing,

[1] *Bhagavadgītā*, 18. 65.
[2] *Gītābhāṣya*, 18. 65.
[3] ibid., 9.34.

whose will is true, the sole cause of the entire universe, the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Person. . .

This meditation should be in accordance with one of several such meditations (*vidyā-s*) prescribed in the Vedānta-texts. The most important of these are the *sadvidyā*, *bhūmavidyā*, *daharavidyā*, *upakosalavidyā*, *śāṇḍilyavidyā*, *vaiśvānaravidyā*, *ānandamayavidyā*, and *akṣaravidyā*.[1] Each of these meditations describes Brahman in a particular mode, i.e. emphasizing certain of His attributes. For instance, in the *daharavidyā* one is to meditate on Brahman as the small (*dahara*) space or ether (*ākāśa*) dwelling in the heart, possessing such characteristics as containing within it all that is in this world and all that is not, all desires, and being free from evil (*apahatapāpman*), free from old age (*vijaraḥ*), free from death (*vimṛtyuḥ*), free from sorrow (*viśokaḥ*), free from hunger (*vijighatsaḥ*), free from thirst (*apipāsaḥ*), and being one whose desire and will are ever realized.[2] *All* of these meditations have as their objects a Brahman qualified by attributes (*saguṇa* Brahman):

> *paravidyāsu sarvāsu saguṇameva brahmopāsyam,*
> *phalaṃ caikarūpameva . . .*[3]

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 3. 3. 56; *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6. 2. 1 ff, 7. 1 ff, 8. 1 ff, 4. 10; *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 5. 4-5; *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 5. 11 ff; *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2. 5 ff; *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 1, respectively.

[2] *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 8. 1. 2-3, 5—*satyakāmaḥ, satya-saṃkalpaḥ*—literally, 'whose desire is true', 'whose will is true'; see *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 12; 3. 3. 38; 3. 3. 42 ff; 4. 4. 5.

[3] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 1. 1; text p. 83.

> That which is to be meditated on in all of the *paravidyā-s* is only Brahman possessing qualities, and the fruit is of that one form only.

Rāmānuja interprets *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6. 2. 1, the chief text (*mahāvākya*) of the Advaitin, as a meditation (the *sadvidyā*). Meditation on 'that which is' (*sat*) suggests that the 'object of meditation is without attributes' (*nirguṇa*); and, in fact, there is no enumeration of attributes in this text as is the case in the *daharavidyā*. Nevertheless, Rāmānuja says attributes are to be assumed on the basis of other texts—for instance, in 6. 2. 3 of the same Upaniṣad, it is said that the entire creation proceeds from *Sat*.

> As has been explained by the competent early *ācārya-s* in their commentaries, the object of worshipful meditation in the so-called *sadvidyā tat tvam asi* is Brahman as qualified by qualities. . . . all beautiful qualities are inherent in His proper form, so that in the *sadvidyā* too He is actually worshipped as being distinguished by all the beautiful qualities inherent in His proper form: therefore in the *sadvidyā*, too, the end to be attained is the qualified Brahman. . .[1]

The devotee need practise only one of these meditations—each is sufficient in itself to effect the desired result and the practice of more than one will not effect a better result. In the performance of karmas with a view to obtaining wealth, progeny, a heavenly abode,

[1] Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, 88, p. 246.

etc. the greater the abundance of acts performed, the greater the reward. But this is not so with regard to meditation on Brahman. There are no degrees of the attainment of Brahman.

> *sarvāsāṃ hi brahma-vidyānām anavadhikātiśayā-nanda-brahmānubhavaḥ phalam aviśiṣṭaṃ śrūyate. . . sa . . . brahmānubhavaḥ ekayā vidyayâvāpyate cet kim anyayeti* |[1]
>
> For of all these meditations on Brahman, scripture states the non-difference of the fruit which is the experience of Brahman as boundless, absolute bliss. . . if the experience of Brahman is obtained by one *vidyā*, of what use are others?

There is one significant qualification to this conclusion—there are certain qualities of Brahman without which He is not properly understood—these must be included in every meditation in addition to those specified in the particular *vidyā* chosen.

> Those other qualities which are 'equal to the things', i.e. which are attributes determining the essential character of the thing, and therefore necessarily entering into the idea of the thing, must be included in all meditations, no less than the thing itself.[2]

These qualities are *satya* (true being), *jñāna* (knowledge), *ānanda* (bliss), *amalatva* (purity), and *anantatva* (infinity).

[1] *Śrībhāṣya*, 3. 3. 57.
[2] ibid., 3. 3. 13; Thibaut, p. 638.

> . . . in order that a true notion may be formed of Brahman as the object of meditation, such qualities as true being, bliss, and so on, have to be included in all meditations on Brahman. Such additional qualities, on the other hand, as e.g. compassion, which indeed cannot exist apart from the subject to which they belong, but are not necessary elements of the idea of Brahman, are to be included in those meditations only where they are specially mentioned.[1]
>
> Meditation in accordance with one of the *vidyā-s* is to be repeated again and again, daily, until death.[2]
>
> The meaning of Scripture is fulfilled only by repeated acts of knowledge 'on account of teaching', i.e. because the teaching of Scripture is conveyed by means of the term 'knowing' (*vedana*), which is synonymous with meditating (*dhyāna, upāsana*). . . Now *dhyai* means to think of something not in the way of mere representation (*smṛti*), but in the way of continued representation. And *upās* has the same meaning.[3]

Meditation on Brahman performed only once is of no significance, for meditation does not itself result in the attainment of Brahman. Its purpose is just to be a means of expressing devotion toward the Supreme Person and of generating ever more intense devotion.

[1] ibid.
[2] ibid, 4. 1. 1; 4. 1. 12.
[3] ibid., 4. 1. 1; Thibaut, pp. 715-16.

The vision which results therefrom is not an actual vision of the Lord but an intense imagination of the Lord like unto direct vision by its clearness. Devotion leads to meditation and holding the Lord ever before the *manas* in meditation intensifies devotion, the mental vision of the Lord becoming ever more vivid until the meditation itself is as dear to the devotee as is the object of that meditation. In this sense we may say that meditation is an end in itself as well as a means—*bhakti* is a kind of knowledge which not only results in pleasure but is pleasure itself.[1] The Bakti-yogin's absolute devotion pleases the Lord such that the Lord leads him to Himself—indeed, He is compelled to take him to Himself.

> *nityaśaḥ mām udyoga-prabhṛti satataṃ—sarvakālam ananya-cetā yaḥ smarati—atyartha-matpriyatvena matsmṛtyā vinā ātmadhāraṇam alabhamāno niratiśaya-priyāṃ smṛtiṃ yaḥ karoti; tasya nityayuktasya—nityayogaṃ kāṅkṣamāṇasya yogino'haṃ sulabhaḥ—ahameva prāpyaḥ, na madbhāva aiśvaryādikaḥ, suprāpaśca—tadviyogam asahamāno'hameva taṃ vṛṇe। matprāptyanuguṇopāsana-vipākaṃ tadvirodhi-nirasanam atyartha-matpriyatvādikaṃ cāhameva dadāmīty arthaḥ।*[2]
>
> He who remembers constantly, ever since beginning efforts toward Me, with thoughts all the time on no other object—he who, being unable

[1] Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., 141, p. 296.
[2] *Gītābhāṣya*, 8. 14.

> to support *ātman* except by remembrance of Me with intense love toward Me, performs remembrance which is extremely dear—for this ever disciplined one, the yogin who desires eternal union, I am easy to obtain in that I alone am to be obtained, not a mode of Me like *aiśvarya*,[1] etc; and easy to obtain (in that) being unable to bear separation from that one, I Myself choose him; I Myself give the fruition of the meditation adopted in order to obtain Me, remove the obstacles to that (meditation) and give the intense love for Me, etc. . .

When his *prārabdha karman*[2] is exhausted the Bhaktiyogin obtains the Lord Himself, enjoying Him *directly*. In Yoga, he enjoys the Lord with the *manas*; in release he will enjoy Him with the eyes:

> *svarūpataḥ svabhāvataśca yo'ham, guṇato vibhūtito'pi yāvāṃścāham, taṃ mām evaṃrūpayā bhaktyā tattvato 'bhijānāti māṃ tattvato jñātvā tadanantaram—tattvajñānānantaraṃ tato bhaktito māṃ viśate—praviśati | tattvataḥ svarūpa-svabhāvaguṇa-vibhūti-darśanottarakāla-bhāvinyā anavadhikātiśaya-bhaktyā māṃ prāpnotity arthaḥ |*[3]

[1] 'wealth'—one of the goals which may be obtained by Bhaktiyoga.

[2] That *karman* which had already begun to have its effect when the Lord was propitiated—once the Lord has willed the reward or punishment for an act, this reward or punishment must be experienced by the embodied soul.

[3] *Gītābhāṣya*, 18. 55.

> By *bhakti* of this kind he comes to know Me in very truth, who I am in essential nature and essential character, and what I am in manifested attributes; knowing Me, in very truth, immediately, i.e. immediately after knolwedge of the truth, by this, i.e. by *bhakti*, he enters into Me; he obtains Me by boundless and absolute *bhakti* which at a future time becomes *darśana* of My essential nature, essential character and manifested attributes.

What is stated here fully supports the conclusions which we have reached in earlier chapters. Rāmānuja's Yoga, like Patañjali's, aims at the suppression of normal consciousness—the cessation of the functioning of the mental faculties with regard to objects of sense; but it does not aim at the suppression of *all* states of consciousness—an objectless state in which the yogin 'experiences' pure Being, whether it be *ātman* or the absolute oneness of Brahman. In Rāmānuja's Yoga, the mental faculties continue to function and with intensity, not toward sense-objects but toward the Supreme Person. The *dhyāna* or Yoga serves only as a technique by which to generate devotion; it does not result in any kind of direct experience—rather, its result is entirely subjective. As one might expect, Rāmānuja says nothing of *samādhi*, the eighth stage of Patañjali's Yoga, at least with respect to the result of *dhyāna*. The Bhaktiyogin never goes beyond *dhyāna*. Another matter on which Rāmānuja has no comment is *siddhi*, the 'miraculous or magical power' which is said to accrue to the yogin in the early

stages of *samādhi*.[1] There is nothing 'magical' whatsoever about Rāmānuja's Yoga—it is simply a technique by which to discipline the mind in devotion. In fact, there is very little of the 'mystical' in Rāmānuja's Yoga. As stated, the *darśana* which follows from *dhyāna* is purely subjective; Yoga does not give knowledge of the Supreme Person, nor does it result directly in 'union' with the Divine.

Rāmānuja's central concern is to indicate the means to the release which is the attainment of Brahman, but he does allow for a *kaivalya*. There are in fact three goals which may be attained through Bhaktiyoga: (1) *aiśvarya*—lordship or power, especially with reference to material wealth (*artha*); (2) *kaivalya*—isolation or detachment, the state of enjoying *ātman* alone as distinct from *prakṛti*; (3) *bhagavān*—the Lord, the Supreme Person. We are not concerned here with him who seeks *aiśvarya* (*aiśvaryārthin*) since he does not aspire to release and indeed, does not obtain release.[2] He who seeks *kaivalya* (*kaivalyārthin*) is:

> *jijñāsuḥ—prakṛti-viyuktātma-svarūpāvāptīcchuḥ*,[3]
>
> He who desires the obtaining of the essential nature of the *ātman* distinct from *prakṛti*;

He who seeks to obtain the Lord is the *jñānin*, 'the wise one', 'he who possesses knowledge'. The *jñānin* is:

[1] See Eliade, *Yoga*, op. cit., p. 85f.
[2] *Gītābhāṣya*, 8. 16.
[3] ibid., 7. 16.

bhagavaccheṣataika-rasātma-svarūpavit, prakṛtiviyukta-kevalātmany aparyavasyan bhagavantaṃ prepsuḥ bhagavantam eva parama-prāpyaṃ manvānaḥ ।[1]

He who, knowing the essential nature of the *ātman* to consist of the one essence of being *śeṣa* to the Lord, not stopping in *ātman* alone distinct from *prakṛti*, desires to obtain the Lord, thinking that the Lord only is the supreme object to be obtained.

These definitions of the *kaivalyārthin* and *jñānin* seem to indicate that he who seeks *kaivalya* stops with the attainment of *ātmadarśana*, while he who seeks to obtain the Lord goes on to the higher meditation (*paravidyā*). If this is the case, the fact supports the idea that *ātmadarśana* is to be taken as comparable to Patañjali's *samādhi*. And, it perhaps indicates why Rāmānuja does not integrate his four stages of maturity in *ātmadarśana* with the vision of the *ātman* as *śeṣa*. However, as stated above, Rāmānuja does not associate *kaivalya* with *ātmadarśana*. He deals with *kaivalya* in commenting on the second six chapters of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which chapters he says deal with the higher meditation of Bhaktiyoga. Following his definition of the three kinds of seekers, he says, 'All these meditate on Me only' (*sarva evaite māmevopāsate*).[2] *Upās* is used by Rāmānuja only with reference to the higher meditation. In *Gītābhāṣya*, 8. 8 he states, 'The

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 7. 16.
[2] ibid., 7. 18.

different modes of *upāsana* for the three are now stated ' (*trayāṇām upāsana-prakārabhedaṃ vaktum upakramate*). In *Gītābhāṣya* 8. 11 he says, ' Now the mode of remembering for one who seeks *kaivalya* is stated ' (*atha kaivalyārthināṃ smaraṇa-prakāram āha*) and in describing that mode of remembering he says:

> *yogākhyāṃ dhāraṇām āsthitaḥ . . . mām anusmaran. . . matsamānākāram apunarāvṛttim ātmānaṃ prāpnoti* |[1]
>
> Established in *dhāraṇā* called Yoga, remembering Me, he obtains the *ātman* which has a form similar to My own and does not return.

Here he explicitly states that he who seeks *kaivalya* engages in the higher meditation and does so following *dhāraṇā*. Thus, we must conclude that *ātmadarśana* is not *kaivalya*; however, we cannot thereby come to any firm conclusion as to *ātmadarśaṇa* and *samādhi*. In any case, *ātmadarśana* is a state quite different from Patañjali's *samādhi*, both by the fact that Rāmānuja's view of the nature of the *ātman* differs from Patañjali's and by the fact that a vision of *ātman* distinct from *prakṛti* is not achieved beyond the functioning of the mental faculties. In *ātmadarśana* the *ātman* is not only conscious of itself but also of the Supreme *Ātman*, and it is conscious through the instrumentality of *manas*. That Rāmānuja affirms that the seeker of *kaivalya* as well as he who seeks to obtain the Supreme Person must engage in the higher meditation on the Supreme

[1] ibid., 8. 12-13.

Person is only to be expected. He states again and again, and in various ways, that attaining any goal is due only to devotion—propitiation of the Supreme Person; it is not the direct result of Yoga.

Unlike the *aiśvaryārthin*, he who seeks *kaivalya* gets release:

> *ya evam akṣaram upāsate te 'pi māṃ prāpnuvanty eva—matsamānākāram asaṃsāriṇam ātmānaṃ prāpnuvanty evety arthaḥ* | [1]
>
> Those who meditate on the *akṣara*[2] thus, they also obtain only Me—i.e. they obtain the *ātman* as having a form similar to Mine, free from *saṃsāra*.

That the *kaivalyārthin* gets release, i.e. obtains Brahman, is based on the fact that he has Brahman as his object, both in *dhāraṇā* and in *dhyāna*:

> *ātma-yāthātmyavidaḥ paramapuruṣa-niṣṭhasya ca . . . sa enān brahma gamayatīti . . . brahmaprāpti-vacanād acid-viyuktam ātmavastu brahmātmakatayā brahma-śeṣataika-rasamity anusaṃdheyaṃ, tatkratu-nyāyācca*[3] |
>
> The passage, 'He conducts these to Brahman', since it means Brahman is obtained, applies to both the knower of the real nature of the *ātman* and the one devoted to the Supreme Person,

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 12. 3-5.

[2] literally, 'unmanifest'—defined here as *ātman* distinct from *prakṛti*.

[3] *Gītābhāṣya*, 8. 22.

since *ātma*-nature as separate from *prakṛti* is to be reflected upon as, in essence, dependent upon Brahman since it has Brahman as its *ātman*; and according to (the principle of) *tat-kratu-nyāya*.[1]

On this point the *Vedāntasāra* is most clear and concise:

> *ubhaye'pi hi paripūrṇaṃ brahmopāsate mukha-bhedena—svātma-śarīrakaṃ brahma kecana brahmātmakaṃ svātmānam itara iti* |[2]
>
> For both meditate on the complete Brahman by different facets—the one on Brahman whose body is his own *ātman*, the other on his own *ātman* ensouled by Brahman.

Although the *kaivalyārthin* gets release and, in the sense noted, obtains Brahman, the *jñānin* is a far superior yogin. He is more disciplined than all yogin-s, comparing to the *aiśvaryārthin* and *kaivalyārthin* as Mount Meru to a grain of mustard seed.[3]

> *matpriyatvātirekeṇānanya-dhāraṇa-svabhāvatayā madgatenāntarātmanā—manasā, śraddhāvān—atyartha-matpriyatvena kṣaṇamātra-viśleṣāsahatayā matprāpti-pravṛttau tvarāvān yo māṃ bhajate . . . sevate upāsta*

[1] The principle is that the like effort begets a like result. As applied here, it means that, since both the *kaivalyārthin* and the *jñānin* meditate on Brahman, both obtain Brahman.

[2] *Vedāntasāra* of Bhagavad Rāmānuja, ed. by Pandit V. Krishnamacharya, tr. by M. B. Narasimha Ayyangar, the Adyar Library Series 83, 4. 3. 14.

[3] *Gītābhāṣya*, 6. 47.

> *ityarthaḥ | sa me yuktatamo mataḥ. sa sarvebhyaḥ śreṣṭhatamaḥ |*[1]
>
> . . . with the *ātman* i.e. the *manas* gone to Me by the fact that his essential character is like no other due to his overflowing love for Me—with faith, i.e. with haste determined to obtain Me due to being unable to bear separation even for an instant in his intense love for Me—he who worships Me, i.e. serves Me, meditates on Me, he is considered by Me to be the most disciplined—he is the best above all others.

His *bhakti* is exclusive, one-pointed and constant—'The Yoga to Me of others lasts only until their desires are obtained';[2] for them Brahman is only a means.[3] The *aiśvaryārthin* and the *kaivalyārthin* are dear to the Supreme by the fact that He is dear to them, but the *jñānin* is dear beyond all measure since his devotion is supreme.

> *sarva evaite māmevopāsata ity udārāḥ—vadānyāḥ | ye matto yatkiṃcidapi gṛhṇanti, te hi mama sarvasva-dāyinaḥ | jñānī tvātmaiva me matam—tadāyatta-dhāraṇo'hamiti manye | kasmādevaṃ yasmādayaṃ mayā vinâtmadhāraṇāsaṃbhāvanayā māmevānuttamaṃ prāpyamāsthitaḥ; atastena vinā mamāpy ātmadhāraṇaṃ na saṃbhavati | tato mamātmā hi saḥ ||*[4]

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 6. 47.

[2] ibid. 7. 17: *itarayostu yāvatsvābhilaṣitaprāpti mayā yogaḥ.*

[3] ibid., 7. 17.

[4] ibid., 7. 18; see also 12. 20.

> All these meditate on Me only—thus they are noble i.e. generous; when they accept any little gift from Me, they are very generous to Me; but the *jñānin* I consider to be My very self, i.e. I hold that I am dependent upon him; how can this be?—since, lacking in support of *ātman* without Me, he is fixed on Me only as his highest goal; without him I Myself lack support of *ātman*—for, by this he is My *ātman*.

Since Brahman is a superior object to *ātman* and since He is more favourable toward those who seek only to obtain Him, the way of the *jñānin* is quick and easy, while the toil of the *kaivalyārthin* is great.[1]

> *anantaram ātmaprāpti-sādhanabhūtād ātmopāsanāt bhaktirūpasya bhagavad-upāsanasya svasādhyaniṣ-pādane śaighryāt susukhopādānatvācca śraiṣṭhyam . . . bhagavad-upāsanasya prāpya-bhūtopāsya-śraiṣṭhyāt śraiṣṭhyaṃ . . .*[2]
>
> The superiority of meditation on Bhagavān which has the form of *bhakti* to meditation on the *ātman* which is the means to obtain the *ātman* immediately, with respect to accomplishing one's goal, since it is quicker and it is easier to perform . . . (is now stated) the superiority of the meditation on Bhagavān is due to the superiority of the object of meditation which is to be obtained.

[1] ibid., 12. 2, 6-7, 12. 3-5.
[2] ibid., 12, Introduction.

Rāmānuja does not explicitly make the point, but implicit in his statements is the fact that, due to the superiority of his object, the *jñānin's* attainment is also superior, i.e. more blissful. The *kaivalyārthin* enjoys *ātman* as ensouled by the Supreme, but the *jñānin* enjoys the Supreme Himself.

While Rāmānuja allows for *kaivalya*, his discussion of the matter is very brief; and one suspects that he admits *kaivalya* not simply because scriptue says that one who obtains the *ātman* distinct from *prakṛti* gets release, but also because of the prestige of a Yoga, the goal of which is *kaivalya*. Even at that, he admits it only on his own terms—his view of *kaivalya* radically differs from that of Patañjali. *Kaivalya* is to be obtained only by the grace of the Supreme Person and only when the Supreme Person is pleased by the *kaivalyārthin's* devotion to Him—*kaivalya* is not the direct result of Yoga. Nor does it result *in* Yoga—*kaivalya* is enjoyed only after the death of the body. The only result in Yoga is devotion, whether one practises Yoga with a view to enjoying his own self or with a view to enjoying the Supreme Person. Further, *kaivalya* is a state of isolation only in the sense that it is an experience of *ātman* as distinct from (isolated from) *prakṛti*. It is not an objectless state—the *ātman* in *kaivalya* is a knower, conscious of itself *and* conscious of the Supreme Person who ensouls it.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

I BEGIN the conclusion as I began the first chapter, emphasizing the fact that Rāmānuja defines the Means to Release and the nature and function of Patañjalian-type Yoga within this Means strictly in terms of dogmatic theology, and dogmatic theology based only on scripture, as interpreted by him. The fact bears emphais because:

(1) Rāmānuja so rigorously applies dogma in defining practice and makes a point of the fact that he is doing so;

(2) in a system of doctrine and practice which includes a Patañjalian-type Yoga, it is possible that doctrine will be defined on the basis of practice, namely, yogic experience, rather than practice (Yoga) on the basis of doctrine; and

(3) defining practice strictly in accordance with dogma is the means by which Rāmānuja finds it possible to rely on a Patañjalian-type Yoga and yet avoid what he considers to be its pitfalls.

Rāmānuja affirms that dogma defines practice in three ways which bear on our concern:

(1) He affirms that scripture is the source of knowledge of Brahman and yogic perception is not. In fact, he affirms that yogic perception is not at all a source of knowledge; rather, it is simply a vivid

imagination of an object due to intense concentration upon that object.

(2) He affirms that gaining right knowledge of the natue of the real—right theological orientation—from scripture is fundamental to the pursuit of release.

(3) He rejects the Yoga School's view of the nature of the soul and of the Lord (*Īśvara*). This is the one and only direct comment which Rāmānuja makes on the Yoga School; yet it is sufficient to indicate that Rāmānuja will structure Patañjalian-type Yoga strictly in terms of his theistic doctrine; for he says, ' The nature of the meditation in which the Yoga consists is determined by the nature of the object of meditation. . .'.

Defining religious practice in terms of dogmatic theology means that, in the final analysis, the Means to Release as well as the end to be obtained in release is Brahman, the Supreme Person. Brahman manifests the material universe and individual souls out of Himself, preserves and withdraws the same, and stands to them as Soul, Inner Ruler, *Śeṣin*. It is by His will that souls are bound in *saṃsāra* and so by His will that they are released. But Brahman is neither capricious nor completely determinative—He releases only those souls who are exclusively and constantly devoted to Himself and that some souls are devoted and some are not is determined solely by their own will. Therefore, Rāmānuja speaks of human devotion as well as divine grace as the Means to Release. The nature of the Means to Release is determined primarily on the basis of the doctrine that the individual soul and the Supreme

Person are related as *śeṣa* and *Śeṣiṇ*. By the fact that this is the relationship between the soul and the Supreme Person, devotion is the means to release—devotion is the Supreme Person's demand and it is the individual soul's natural response; a vision of one's own self gives rise to devotion to the Supreme Self; objectification of the Supreme Person in *dhāraṇā* leads to the control of the mental faculties; and, performance of Vedic karmas purifies the *manas* of the after-effects of past deeds.

That which gives rise to the highest devotion is Yoga. Scripture states that the knowledge of Brahman which results in the attainment of Brahman (which is release) has the form of meditation, and meditation (*dhyāna*) is the meditation of a Patañjalian-type Yoga. Thus, Rāmānuja prescribes Yoga and, in fact, makes it the disciplinal core of the Means to Release. However, this is not 'Patañjalian' Yoga as Patañjali defines it. Patañjali's Yoga must be defined and purposed in terms of Rāmānuja's theistic doctrine. Its goal, context and mentality, and technique must be determined in accordance with the object of meditation—the end to be obtained.

The Goal

The goal of Yoga is not self-realization, not an experience of absolute oneness or pure being, nor even direct perception; rather, the goal is devotion. Therefore, yogic meditation (*dhyāna*) has the form of remembrance, and remembrance results in vivid imagination, not actual vision. Actual vision is not required.

One may also argue the other way around: he could first define yogic meditation as remembrance, then conclude that because it is remembrance it results in vivid imagination only, remembrance being incapable of giving actual vision, and then affirm that devotion and not self-realization, etc. is its goal. But, Rāmānuja does not do this—he holds that Yoga is to be defined in terms of dogma: because the individual soul and the Supreme Person have such and such a nature, devotion is the goal; and because devotion is the goal, the nature of Yoga is such and such. The goal being devotion, Rāmānuja says nothing of the attainment of miraculous powers (*siddhi*) by means of Yoga; and he says nothing of *samādhi*. These elements have no place in a Yoga, the goal of which is to generate devotion.

Context and Mentality

The context and mentality of Yoga is one of reliance on the Supreme Person—one of worship. That which prepares the mental faculties for Yoga and continues from day to day along with Yoga are acts of worship toward the Supreme Person. Yoga is not to be practised in an ascetic, world-renouncing context. Renouncing physical activity not only does not contribute to the welfare of the soul, but may be utterly detrimental. The physical body and material objects are given by the Supreme Person as instruments by which the soul may attain to release. The nature of bondage is embodiedness in order that the soul may, by means of a body, come to worship the Supreme Person.

The mentality of Yoga-practice is reliance on the Supreme Person. The only object to be taken in *dhāraṇā* and in *dhyāna* is the Supreme Person. He only is capable of controlling or purifying the *manas* which in turn controls the senses. Patañjali admits *Īśvara*, but this *Īśvara* is not the Supreme Person, the Inner Ruler, *Śeṣiṇ*. The mentality of Yoga is not one of self-mastery. The senses and the mental faculties cannot be controlled by self-effort—one who attempts such is doomed to failure and may severely limit his capacity to pursue release. A certain amount of physical renunciation is necessary in the practice of Yoga but this proceeds only as far as discipline of the mental functions, not to the complete renunciation of these functions.

The context within which and the mentality with which Yoga is to be performed points the yogin away from self and toward the Supreme Person. The essence of Karmayoga is the renunciation of all selfish attachment to the fruit of action, one's agency in action and the action itself—the offering of all up to the Supreme Person. In Yoga a vision of the self is necessary, but only as propaedeutic to meditation on the Supreme Person. Further, one does not get this vision by focusing on the self, but by focusing on the Supreme Person. The context and mentality of Yoga must subserve one end only—devotion to the Supreme Person. When one daily enters into Yoga, his mental 'set' is one of worship; Yoga generates devotion, and from Yoga he returns to worship. The daily activity

of the *mumukṣu* alternates between worship with the outer organs and worship with the inner organs.

Rāmānuja concedes that one may practise Yoga with a *kaivalya*-mentality, but he keeps this kind of self-seeking strictly within the bounds of his theology and considers that one who seeks the Supreme Person only is vastly superior to one who seeks *kaivalya*. One who seeks the self only cannot reach his goal except by devotion to the Supreme Person; and when he obtains his goal, he obtains it only in relation to the Supreme Person. Rāmānuja gives no consideration whatsoever to a *kaivalya* of utter aloneness—the attainment of such a state is not withn the realm of desire or possibility.

Technique

The purpose of the Yogic disciplines is *citta-vṛttinirodha* only with respect to the functioning of the mental faculties toward the objects of sense—only with respect to normal consciousness. The *manas*, *citta* and *buddhi* must be disciplined to serve the end of devotion, but they cannot serve this end if their function is completely suppressed. To the highest stage of Yoga the *manas* continues to function as the instrument by which thought is directed toward the Supreme Person.

The kind of moral and physical discipline required by Rāmānuja under the heading of 'qualities of soul' (*ātma-guṇa*) is basically the same as that encompassed by Patañjali's *yama* and *niyama*. Wherein Rāmānuja significantly differs from Patañjali with respect to

this kind of discipline is in affirming that the attempt to develop such ' qualities ' is to be supplemented by the performance of *karman* as worship of the Supreme Person. Such disciplines are to be brought to perfection with the aid of divine grace—not by self-mastery. Their perfection does not require an atmosphere of action-renunciation—it does not require that one take up the life of a *saṃnyāsin*. In fact, they are perfected quickly and easily in the householder-state wherein a multitude of acts are performed, when such acts are performed as worship.

Rāmānuja prescribes *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* and *pratyāhāra* without explicit or implicit alteration or criticism. From this, we must conclude that he accepts them basically as defined by Patañjali.

The specific purpose of *dhāraṇā* in Rāmānuja's Yoga is to bring the *manas* to one-pointedness in order to entirely suppress the activity of the *buddhi*, *citta*, and *manas* with respect to objects of sense. This being the case, it is basically the same kind of discipline as Patañjali's *dhāraṇā*. The key difference between the two lies in the fact that in Rāmānuja's *dhāraṇā* the object to be taken in order to make the *manas* one-pointed is the Supreme Person and He only, while in Patañjali's *dhāraṇā* the object may be simply a sense-object or a concept. Rāmānuja requires this, not only because he considers that the *manas*, etc. can be brought under control only by divine power, but also because he desires to insure that the yogin's orientation is always toward an object which is personal and one which possesses

such qualities as will give rise to devotion. In Patañjali's Yoga, the use of a concept or sense-object is meant to make for abstraction and is used only as a means; Rāmānuja's prescription of the Supreme Person as the object in *dhāraṇā* is meant to make for a personal relationship with the object and, while at this stage of Yoga the object is used as a means, it is used as a means because at a later stage it becomes the final end. Rāmānuja explicitly points out that meditation on sense-objects or concepts is not conducive to the attainment of the desired goal—it does not conduce to devotion to a Supreme Person. In fact, he says concentration on sense-objects only gives rise to greater attachment to these objects, and thereby hinders one from controlling the mental faculties.

Though we cannot come to a firm conclusion in the matter, it appears that Rāmānuja holds that a vision of the *ātman* is the immediate result of *dhāraṇā*. If this is the case, Rāmānuja's psychology evidently allows that one can have a direct vision of the self without passing into deep trance or entasis. That *ātmadarśana* results from *dhāraṇā* is an aspect of Yoga entirely peculiar to Rāmānuja's Yoga, but this may be easily accounted for by reason of Rāmānuja's unique view of the nature of the self.

The salient features of Rāmānuja's *dhyāna* have been adequately noted. In *dhyāna* the mental faculties are focused exclusively on the Supreme Person—not with a view to making the object more and more abstract until an objectless state is attained, but with

a view to generating devotion towards the Supreme Person. *Dhyāna* is simply remembrance and its result is an entirely subjective vision. Rāmānuja simply omits *samādhi*—*dhyāna* goes on and on resulting only in ever greater devotion, ever more vivid imagination.

Rāmānuja considers the practice of Yoga as essential to the attainment of release; nevertheless, Yoga is only a '*śeṣa*', something to be used in order to gain an end entirely outside the grasp of yogic discipline. He draws significantly on Patañjali's Yoga but takes, as it is, only what is useful and discards or radically redefines the rest; further, he is most cautious about those aspects of yogic discipline which he accepts as they are defined by Patañjali.

He considers that the primary pitfall in Yoga is at the very beginning where one is attempting to control the inner and outer organs. He guards against this pitfall primarily by prescribing Karmayoga and by the taking of the Supreme Person only as the object of *dhāraṇā*. There is no chance of going astray beyond *dhāraṇā*—when one has seen the *ātman* as *śeṣa*, he inevitably proceeds to meditation on the *Śeṣin*.

APPENDIX I

NON-MEDITATIVE FORMS OF BHAKTI

RĀMĀNUJA makes a brief mention of several modes of *bhakti* other than the meditative mode which we have described. Generally speaking, these are the more 'popular' expressions of *bhakti* which developed in the Hindu tradition. Those which he most frequently enumerates are *stuti*, *namaskṛti*, *yatana*, *kīrtana*, *arcana* and *praṇāma*.[1] *Stuti* is 'praise'. *Namaskṛti* and *praṇāma* signify 'obeisance', the former in the sense of bowing down; the latter in the complete prostration. *Yatana* is 'striving' or 'making an effort'. *Kīrtana* denotes 'reciting the Name of the Lord' and is used by Rāmānuja in the sense of *nāmasaṃkīrtana*—'reciting the names' (of Viṣṇu, i.e. Brahman). With the exception of *stuti*, these elements are elaborated in *Gītābhāṣya*, 9. 14:

> *atyartha-matpriyatvena matkīrtana-yatana-namaskārair vinā kṣaṇāṇumātre'py ātmadhāraṇam alabhamānāḥ mad-guṇaviśeṣa-vācīni mannāmāni smṛtvā pulakāñcita-sarvāṅgāḥ harṣagadgada-kaṇṭhāḥ nārāyaṇa-kṛṣṇa-vāsudevety evamādīni satataṃ kīrtayantaḥ tathaiva yatantaḥ—matkarmasv arcanādikeṣu tadupakārakeṣu*

[1] Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., 91, p. 248; *Gītābhāṣya*, 9. 14, 34; 11. 55; 12. 10.

bhavana-nandana-vanakaraṇādikeṣu ca dṛḍhasaṃ-kalpā yatamānāḥ, bhakti-bhārāvanamita-manobuddhy-abhimāna-padadvaya-karadvaya-śirobhir aṣṭāṅgair acintitapāṃsu-kardama-śarkarādike dharātale daṇḍa-vat praṇipatantaḥ, satataṃ mām nityayuktāḥ—nityayogaṃ kāṅkṣamāṇā ātmāntaṃ maddāsya-vyavasāyina upāsate ||

With supreme love for Me, they are unable to support the *ātman* for even a moment without singing My praises, striving and bowing before Me; remembering My names which speak of My distinguished attributes, their whole body quivers and the hair bristles, their voices speaking with joy, ever reciting, Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva, etc.; likewise, they strive—and striving with steady purpose in *karman* and worship Me, aids to which are the laying out of gardens and the construction of buildings; throwing themselves down on the ground like a stick regardless of pebbles, mud, dust, with the eight members of the body—the head, two hands, two feet, self-regard, mind and intellect, falling prostrate in excess *bhakti*; ever constantly disciplined toward Me, desiring eternal union, the end of the *ātman*, they meditate as diligent servants to Me.

Arcana is 'worship'—Rāmānuja employs the term specifically with reference to worship performed before an image. Worship of the image in the temple is

spoken of in *Gītābhāṣya*, 12. 10, to be noted below. In *Gītābhāṣya*, 9. 34, Rāmānuja speaks of worship of the image in one's home:

> *madyājī—anavadhikātiśaya - priyamadanubhavakārita-madyajanaparo bhava । yajanaṃ nāma paripūrṇa-śeṣa-vṛttiḥ । aupacārika-sāṃsparśikābhyavahārikādi-sakala-bhogapradānarūpo hi yāgaḥ । yathā madanubhavajanita - niravadhikātiśayaprīti-kārita-madyajanaparo bhavasi*:
>
> *madyājī*—be intent on worshipping Me as a result of the experience of Me, in boundless, absolute love; being a complete *śeṣa* is called *yajana*, for *yāga-s* are of the form of rendering all kinds of services (enjoyments) like the external (waving lighted camphor, fanning, etc.), the actual (garlanding, smearing sandal paste, etc.) and the offering of the eatable (milk, fruit, etc.); just so, you should be intent on worshipping Me as a result of the boundless absolute love which arises from the experience of Me.

Rāmānuja is clear that such non-meditative expressions of *bhakti* are not substitutes for yogic meditation as the means of obtaining the Supreme Brahman—stating again and again that Brahman is obtained only by *bhakti* which has the form of meditation which has matured to the most vivid perception.[1] But, he is not

[1] Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., 91, p. 248: *viśadatama-pratyakṣatāpannānudhyānarūpa-bhaktyekalabhyaḥ*.

clear as to what significance they *do* have for one desirous of release. With one exception, (*Gītābhāṣya*, 12. 10) he elaborates on them entirely within his comments to Chapter 9 of the *Bhagavadgītā*. Here, he discusses them together with steady remembrance under the heading, 'the essential nature of *bhakti*' (*bhakti-svarūpam*).[1] In *Gītābhāṣya*, 12. 10, he assigns them a lesser role:

> *athaivaṃvidha-smṛtyabhyāse'py asamartho'si, mat-karma-paramo bhava—madīyāni karmāṇy ālayanir-māṇodyānakaraṇa-pradīpāropaṇa-mārjanābhyukṣaṇopa-lepana-puṣpāharaṇa-pūjāpravartana-nāmasaṃkīrtana-pradakṣiṇa-stutinamaskārādīni, etāny atyartha-priyat-venācara, atyartha-priyatvena madarthaṃ karmāṇi kurvannapi acirād abhyāsayogapūrvikāṃ mayi sthirāṃ cittasthitiṃ labdhvā matprāptirūpāṃ siddhim avāpsyasi* ||
>
> If you have no ability for practice of remembrance like this, be intent on *karman* for Me—karmas belonging to Me such as construction of temples, creation of gardens, lighting up lamps, sweeping, sprinkling water and otherwise beautifying, gathering flowers and worshipping Me therewith, repeating (My) names, circumambulating, praising, bowing, etc.—perform these with intense love; even performing karmas with intense love for My sake, having

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 9. 34 introductory phrase; see also 9, introduction.

> soon obtained steady fixture of thought in Me by the yoga of practice, you will obtain perfection of the form of attainment of Me.

On the next verse (*Bhagavadgītā*, 12. 11) he says:

> *madguṇānusaṃdhānakṛta-madekapriyatvākāraṃ bhaktiyogam āśritya bhaktiyogāṅkurarūpam etanmatkarmāpi kartuṃ na śaknoṣi, tato'kṣarayogam ātmasvabhāvānusaṃdhānarūpaṃ . . . kuru*:
>
> If, resorting to Bhaktiyoga which has the form of exclusive love for Me due to reflection on My qualities, you are unable even to do that karma to Me from which Bhaktiyoga arises—then perform the *akṣarayoga* (Dhyānayoga) which has the form of reflection on the essential character of the *ātman* . . .

From this we learn: (1) that devotional expressions such as those enumerated may be resorted to by yogin-s who have achieved *ātmadarśana*, but who are having difficulty in fixing their thought on the Lord; (2) that they are optional; and (3) that they are useful only as ancillary to Bhaktiyoga. This rather concessional attitude must be balanced with the fact that Rāmānuja enumerates these elements in more than one summary statement of his *upāya*, and that here they have a prominent place:

> *atyartha-matpriyatvena matkīrtana-stutidhyānārcana-praṇāmādibhir vinā ātmadhāraṇam alabhamāno*

madekaprayojanatayā yaḥ satataṃ tāni karoti sa madbhaktaḥ ||[1]

He who, by his intense love for Me, being unable to support his *ātman* without praising Me, hymning Me, meditating on Me, worshipping Me, prostrating before Me, etc., ever performs these with his sole aim being Me, he is My *bhakta*.

tadevaṃ laukikāni śarīra-dhāraṇārthāni vaidikāni ca nitya-naimittikāni karmāṇi matprītaye maccheṣataika-raso mayaiva kārita iti kurvan satataṃ matkīrtana-yatana-namaskārādikān prītyā kurvāṇo manniyāmyaṃ nikhilajagan maccheṣataika-rasamiti cānusaṃdadhāno-'tyarthapriya-madguṇagaṇaṃ cānusaṃdhāyāharahar uktalakṣaṇam idam upāsanam upādadāno māmeva prāpsyasi ||[2]

Thus, doing worldly karmas for the support of the body and Vedic karmas, daily and occasional, seeing these as love toward Me by one who is essentially *śeṣa* to Me, and seeing them as done by Me alone—ever engaging in the singing of My praises, service to Me, bowing to Me, etc., with love, and reflecting that the entire universe ruled by Me is essentially *śeṣa* to Me and reflecting on the host of my intensely beloved

[1] *Gītābhāṣya*, 11. 55; see also 12. 6-7 and Van Buitenen, *Vedārtha-saṃgraha*, op. cit., 91.

[2] *Gītābhāṣya*, 9. 34.

qualities—performing this *upāsana* as defined, you will obtain Me.

We cannot, it seems, come to any firm conclusion in this matter. However, on the basis of such evidence, we may at least conclude that Rāmānuja considers non-meditative expressions of *bhakti* as legitimate even though subordinate to yogic meditation and that (as is indicated by what we have quoted) he speaks of them rather more as one personally involved than as one pressured to recognize popular practices. Whatever their importance, the fact that Rāmānuja includes such elements in his Means to Release does serve to emphasize the fact that Yoga is undertaken in a devotional context.

APPENDIX II

RĀMĀNUJA ON PRAPATTI

Of the nine writings attributed to Rāmānuja, the most highly revered, thoroughly known, and frequently recited by his present-day followers are three prose poems, the *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, the *Śrīraṅgagadya*, and the *Śrīvaikuṇṭhagadya*, collectively known as the *Gadyatraya*. The *Śaraṇāgatigadya* and the *Śrīraṅgagdya*, written in the first-person singular, are taken by Rāmānuja's followers to be a record of his personal acts of *śaraṇāgati* or *prapatti*, a taking refuge at the feet of the merciful Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa, in lieu of any other means to the highest goal: release from the cycle of transmigration and attainment of the abode of bliss. The *Śrivaikuṇṭhagadya* is said to be Rāmānuja's instruction to his disciples as to the proper manner in which to perform *prapatti* as the sole means to salvation.

The importance of these writings to Śrīvaiṣṇava-s can be seen readily in the light of developments in the sect with and since Vedānta Deśika. Less than 150 years after Rāmānuja's death his followers split into two well-defined groups: *Teṅgalai* ('Southern') and *Vaḍagalai* ('Northern'). The split had practical as well as theological bases, but it centred on the question of human effort versus divine grace in effecting the highest

goal. Both of these schools of thought affirm *bhagavad-prapatti* ('resorting to the Lord') to be the supreme means to mokṣa, the Teṅgalai defining *prapatti* as mere receptivity or lack of opposition to divine grace,[1] the Vaḍagalai insisting that *prapatti* must involve a positive act on the part of one desirous of mokṣa before divine grace can effect such an end.[2] The latter school, defined by Vedānta Deśika, makes *prapatti* a six-member (*ṣaḍaṅga*) ritual act involving the recitation of certain *mantra-s*. Both schools claim Rāmānuja as the central authority for such affirmations, the Teṅgalai appealing to *Gītābhāṣya*, 18. 66 and the Vaḍagalai to the *Gadyatraya*.

While Rāmānuja prominently employs the concepts of *prapatti* and *śaraṇāgati*, he in fact, supports neither the Teṅgalai nor the Vaḍagalai view. Close analysis of the *Śaraṇāgatigadya* in relation to Rāmānuja's major writings will show that Rāmānuja did not author this or the *Śrīraṅgagadya*, which has essentially the same emphasis. The *Śrīvaikuṇṭhagadya* is not implicated in this study since it is not an instruction on *prapatti* but, by its own explicit statement, an exposition of the mode of meditation for the Bhaktiyogin:

> Having dived into Yāmunārya's[3] ocean of ambrosia to the best of my understanding, I

[1] Thus, also called the Cat-hold School (*mārjāra-nyāya*).

[2] Thus, also called the Monkey-hold School (*markaṭa-nyāya*)

[3] Rāmānuja's *paramaguru*, i.e., the teacher of Rāmānuja's teacher; Rāmānuja relies very heavily on Yāmuna's ideas, especially with regard to the *Bhagavadgītā*; see J.A.B. van Buitenen,

> have brought forth the gem called Bhaktiyoga and am holding it up to view.
>
> Having accepted Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, as master, well-wisher and *guru*; having the sole desire for service at His two foot-lotuses, exclusive and intensive; and, in order to obtain Him, thinking, 'There is, for me, even in thousands of crores of *kalpa-s*, no other means than resort (*prapatti*) to His two foot-lotuses'; ... with all one's being gone to Him, one should seek the two lotus-like feet of the Consort of Śrī as refuge (*śaraṇam*) (st. 1).
>
> And, then, daily, in order to revive the soul, one should meditate (*anusmaret*) thus .... (st. 2).[1]

The focal point of the writing is devotional meditation (as is further evidenced by numerous occurrences of derivatives of the root *dhyai* in the remainder of the document) and not the *prapatti* of the second paragraph, which emphasizes the attitude with which one should approach meditation.[2] It will be shown that this

Rāmānuja's Vedārthasaṃgraha (Deccan College Monograph, No. 16), Madras, G. S. Press, 1956), pp. 43-4.

[1] I rely on the Sanskrit texts edited by P.B. Annangaracharyar, *Śrī Bhagavad-Rāmānujagrarthamālā* (Conjeeveram, 1956).

[2] Vedānta Deśika, *Gadyabhāṣya*, *Śrī-Vedāntadesika-granthamālā*, ed. P. B. Annangaracharyar (Conjeeveram, 1940), pp. 125 ff., says that the occurrence here of the term *Bhaktiyoga* is an oversight on Rāmānuja's part, since in the next paragraph he states that *prapatti* is the sole means; and this takes precedence.

employment of *prapatti* is quite in line with Rāmānuja elsewhere.[1]

As general context for an examination of the *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, it may be well to summarize the *mokṣopāya* outlined by Rāmānuja in his major writings. In his *Śrībhāṣya*, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, and *Gītābhāṣya*, Rāmānuja emphasizes again and again that the sole means to supreme felicity is Bhaktiyoga, a discipline of dharmic action, knowledge, and meditation. As is evident from the following selection from *Vedārthasaṃgraha* he does employ the concept of *prapatti*, and as the equivalent of *śaraṇāgati*, emphasizing that release is to be gained only by divine grace; but he affirms even more emphatically that divine grace is not forthcoming unless the one desirous of release expresses exclusive and constant devotion to the Supreme Person and this in the form of yogic disciplines:

> That Supreme Person who is the Highest Brahman is to be obtained only by the *bhakti* which has the form of meditation which seeks no other object, is incessant, extremely dear and has reached a state of most vivid perception, of one whose mass of evil acts heaped up during all previous births is destroyed by the accumulation of unequalled good acts; one toward whom the Supreme Person is favourable due to seeking refuge (*śaraṇāgati*) at His lotus-like feet; one

[1] Nonetheless, I would deny Rāmānuja's authorship of this *Gadya*, but for reasons outside the purview of this paper.

who has developed spiritual qualities such as *śama*, *dama*, *tapas*, *śauca*, *kṣamā*, *ārjava*, *bhayābhaya-sthānaviveka*, *dayā* and *ahiṃsā*, accumulating them day by day after having gained knowledge of the true nature of the real from the scriptures, made strong by the instruction of good teachers; one who is devoted to the avoidance of what is forbidden and the performance of daily and occasional acts appropriate to each caste and stage of life, as forms of worship of the Supreme Person; one who with all that is his throws himself at the two lotus-like feet of the Supreme Person; one for whom the darkness concealing the innermost self has been destroyed by the grace of the supremely compassionate Supreme Person who is pleased by the incessant *stuti*, *smṛti*, *namaskṛti*, *vandana*, *yatana*, *kīrtana*, *guṇa-śravaṇa-vacana*, *dhyāna*, *arcana*, *praṇāma*, and the like, which are due to that (devotion).[1]

The over-all emphasis of the passage is on the necessity of reliance on the Supreme Person. He is the object of meditation; the object of the devotion which arises from meditation, the object of worship through the performance of *dhārmic* duties. As the result of such worship, meditation, and the devotion arising therefrom, the highest goal is attained. The series of subordinate clauses indicates that everything from the destruction

[1] My translation, based on the text edited by van Buitenen (op. cit., para. 91, p. 126).

of past sins to *stuti*, *smṛti*, etc. is preparatory to and secondary to the *bhakti* which has the form of meditation. Rāmānuja's comments following this passage summarily indicate: (1) that what is stated is to be understood in terms of the disciplines of the *Bhagavadgītā* and (2) that meditation which has the form of *bhakti*, and *karman* performed as worship, are the two focal points around which the religious life is to be ordered:

> This has been stated by the eminent *guru*, Bhagavān Yāmunācārya in, 'He is to be obtained by the exclusive and intense Bhaktiyoga of one whose innermost being has been purified by Karmayoga and Jñānayoga.' And likewise the *śruti*: 'He who knows both *vidyā* and *avidyā*, having crossed over death by *avidyā*, gains immortality by *vidyā*', where by the word *avidyā* is meant that which is other than *vidyā* or the above mentioned *karman* according to caste and *āśrama*, etc. and by the word *vidyā* is meant meditation which has the form of *bhakti*.[1]

In sharp contrast to Rāmānuja's commentaries, the *Śaraṇāgatigadya* is a dialogue—praise and petition eliciting grace to salvation—first between the author and Śrī, the consort of Nārāyaṇa (the Supreme Lord), and finally between the author and Nārāyaṇa himself. The devotee begins by taking refuge with Śrī ('*śaraṇam aham prapadye*') asking that she might mediate between him and Nārāyaṇa to the end that he who is without

[1] ibid.

other refuge (*ananyaśaraṇam*), who is without the required means—the exclusive and endless higher devotion, higher knowledge and highest devotion (*ekāntikātyanti-kaparabhakti-parajñāna-paramabhakti*)—might obtain the supreme goal, the eternal service (*nityakaiṃkarya*) which arises from the love (*prīti*) born of the experience of the Lord (*bhagavadanubhava*) solely by taking refuge at His lotus-like feet (sts. 1 and 2).[1]

Śrī's answer is brief but emphatically affirmative: 'Let it be so! By this (the act of taking refuge) alone everything will be fulfilled' (st. 3).[2]

Then follows a lengthy address to Nārāyaṇa himself, in which the devotee, 'having no other refuge' (*ananyaśaraṇaḥ*), resorts to Him as his hope of salvation. The opening stanza is a repeat performance of what was addressed to Śrī. The focal point of the address is the two stanzas introduced by the phrase '*atra dvayam*' ('now, two' or 'here, two'):

> Having given up father, mother, wife, sons and (other) relatives, friends and teachers, jewels, money and grain, fields and houses, also all dharmas, all desires and the being with the imperishable, I seek as refuge, O Lord, Thy feet which have gone beyond the world (*Śaraṇāgatigadya*, st. 6).

What appears to be indicated here is that these two *śloka-s* are the author's formal, ritual performance of

[1] My translation, based on Annangaracharyar's, ed. op. cit.
[2] ibid.

śaraṇāgati. This is borne out by reference back to these *śloka-s* later in the dialogue.[1] These later references also rule out two alternative interpretations of *atra dvayam.* Vedānta Deśika says that this *Gadya* is Rāmānuja's commentary on the '*Dvaya Mantram,*'[2] the *mantra* which is uttered in the performance of ritual *prapatti* or *śaraṇāgati,* '*atra dvayam*' then meaning 'so far, *dvayam,*' or, 'here, I have finished my elaboration of the '*Dvaya Mantram*'.[3] Present-day use of the *Gadya* suggests that '*atra dvayam*' is an interpolation indicating that here one is supposed to recite the '*Dvaya Mantram.*' However this may be, some kind of *māntric* recitation is considered central to this *śaraṇāgati.* The two *śloka-s* appear to be patterned after *Bhagavadgītā,* 18. 66.[4]

This is the first of several references to the *Bhagavadgītā.* After three *śloka-s* praising the Lord as Father, Mother, *guru,* etc., evidently based on chapter xi

[1] Sts. 17 and 20, quoted later in the text. Based on ibid.

[2] A twofold (*dvaya*), sacred formula, or incantation (*mantra*). The *mantra* is: *śrīman-nārāyaṇa-caraṇau śaraṇam prapadye, śrīmate nārāyaṇāya namaḥ.* It is one of three *mantra-s* recited by the devotee affirming his dependence upon the Lord (Nārāyaṇa). For a complete explanation see Deśika, *Rahasyatrayasāra,* op. cit.

[3] Deśika, *Gadyabhāṣya,* op. cit., p. 120.

[4] *sarvadharmān parityajya mām ekaṃ śaraṇaṃ vraja,*
ahaṃ tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ.

This *śloka,* called the *carama śloka* ('last word') is, according to Deśika, one of the three *mantra-s* to be recited in the act of *śaraṇāgati.* A. R. Tathacarya (an eminent Śrīvaiṣṇava scholar) points out that the 'Dvaya Mantra' has its origin in this *śloka.*

of the *Bhagavadgītā*,[1] the devotee elaborates on his condition and desires, asking for the pardon of his innumerable sins, concluding this concern with:

> Help me who have said, 'I am one who has sought refuge; I am your servant,' to cross over the divine *guṇa*-composed *māyā*.
>
> (*Śaraṇāgatigadya*, st. 12)

This concept, and even the words employed (*daivīṃ guṇamayīṃ māyām*), make clear reference to *Bhagavadgītā*, 7. 14.[2] He continues in stanza 13: 'Make me a *jñānin* as stated in these three verses'; in stanza 14 he quotes *Bhagavadgītā*, 7. 17-19. 'Make me one who possesses the higher *bhakti* stated in these three places;' he quotes *Bhagavadgītā*, 8. 22, 11. 54, and 18. 54. 'Make me one whose essential character is only *parabhakti*, *parajñāna*, and *paramabhakti*' (st. 15); and he concludes:

> Having the experience of Bhagavān . . . which is due to *parabhakti*, *parajñāna*, and *paramabhakti*, may I become an eternal servant . . . due to the unlimited and unsurpassed love which arises from such experience of Bhagavān (*Śaraṇāgatigadya*, st. 16).[3]

From '*atra dvayam*' on, the author refers to a definite progression from desire for release to the attainment of

[1] See, e.g. verse 43.

[2] *daivī hyeṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā,*
māmeva ye prapadyante māyāmetāṃ taranti te.

[3] My translation, based on Annangaracharyar's ed., op. cit.

eternal servanthood. This 'means' (*upāya*) involves a verbal act of taking refuge which leads to the removal of sins by divine grace. Having thus crossed the *guṇa-s* of *prakṛti*, he becomes a *jñānin*, or one solely devoted to the Lord. Such devotion leads to the higher devotion and, in turn, to the higher knowledge and highest devotion, etc. to the state of eternal service (*nityakaiṃkarya*).

It is not clear whether the devotee, recognizing that one must pass through certain stages in order to attain the supreme goal, desires to do so solely by the grace of the Lord invoked as a result of his *śaraṇāgati*, or whether the devotee offers a fervent prayer that divine grace might co-operate with his own effort until the supreme end is attained.[1] Bhagavān's reply clarifies this:

> Even though you are without all the things prescribed as the means (*upāya*) to obtain this service to Me, even though you are overcome by countless sins which are obstacles to exclusive and endless *parabhakti*, *parajñāna*, and *paramabhakti* at My two lotus-like feet, since, by whatever mode, you have uttered the two (*dvaya*), to you only, by My compassion alone (*eva*), the obstacles to exclusive and endless *parabhakti*, *parajñāna*, and *paramabhakti* at My two lotus-like feet will be completely destroyed, together with

[1] Deśika, *Gadyabhāṣya*, op. cit., pp. 125ff., says the *bhakti*, etc. here requested must be taken as ends in themselves (*svayaṃ-prayojana*), since Rāmānuja is commenting on the 'Dvaya Mantra' and, thus, on *śaraṇāgati* as the sole and direct means to *kaiṃkarya*.

> their causes; exclusive and endless *parabhakti*, *parajñāna*, and *paramabhakti* to My two lotus-like feet are obtained by My grace; *just as you are* (you will have) a direct vision (of Me) by My grace alone (*eva*) (*Śaraṇāgatigadya*, st. 17).[1]

Any doubt that this devotee attains the supreme goal solely by his verbal act of seeking refuge is entirely dispelled by the Lord's reply. Bhagavān concludes (sts. 19-22):

> Remain happy here in Śrīraṅgam[2] itself until the body is cast off, uttering the two (*dvayam*) always thus, together with reflection on its meaning . . . At the time of the fall of the body . . . you will become an eternal servant. Have no doubt about this. For, I, Myself, have stated . . .

and he quotes the *Rāmāyaṇa*[3] and *Bhagavadgītā*, 18. 66.

As affirmed by Vedānta Deśika,[4] the *Gadya's* main thrust is the devotee's act of resorting to or taking refuge in the Supreme Lord and His consort. The chief characteristic of this *śaraṇāgati* is the repetition of a *mantra* avowing one's helplessness and trust in the

[1] Based on Annangaracharyar's, ed. op. cit.

[2] Temple city of South India, considered by Śrīvaiṣṇava-s as one of the most holy spots on earth.

[3] 'I have never told a falsehood before nor shall I tell (one) in the future. Rāma never deviates from what he has once said: "To one who seeks succour from me only once as a *prapanna* and says, "I am Thine," I vouchsafe freedom from the fear of all beings'".

[4] *Gadyabhāṣya*, op. cit.

Lord. And final release is guaranteed to the devotee solely on the basis of his having uttered such a *mantra.*

A look now at Rāmānuja's commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* passages referred to or quoted in the *Gadya* will serve to point up clearly the theological discrepancies between the writings. The *Gadya* points us first to *Bhagavadgītā*, 18. 66, a verse which in fact seems to inform the entire writing. Rāmānuja gives two interpretations to this verse.[1] It may mean:

> Performing, according to ability, with intense love, and as worship of Me, all dharma-s, which have the form of Karmayoga, Jñānayoga, and Bhaktiyoga and which are the means to supreme felicity, renouncing by giving up the fruit, the action, the doership, etc. in the manner heretofore stated, reflect on Me alone as the doer, the object of worship, the goal and the means.

Or it may mean:

> Renouncing all dharma-s which have the form of expiations with regard to the infinite and various kinds of sins accumulated during beginningless time which are obstacles to the commencement of Bhaktiyoga, resort to Me alone as refuge in order to effect the commencement (*māmekaṃ . . . śaraṇaṃ prapadyasva*) of Bhaktiyoga;

[1] Bharatan Kumarappa, *The Hindu Conception of the Deity* (as culminating in Rāmānuja) (London: Luzac & Co., 1934), p. 309, cites only one interpretation; see van Buitenen's comment on this, *Rāmānuja on the Bhagavadgītā* ('S-Gravenhage: H. L. Smits, 1954), p. 27.

> I will release you from all sins, sins which are obstacles to the commencement of *bhakti* which has the essential nature described.[1]

By either interpretation the means to release is Bhaktiyoga preceded by Karmayoga and Jñānayoga. The Lord is the ultimate 'means' in that He releases those who come to Him through these yoga-s, and 'taking refuge,' in both interpretations, is an act and/or an attitude included *within* these three yoga-s. The latter point is made eminently clear in Rāmānuja's statement that the *Bhagavadgītā*,

> beginning with *na tvevāhaṃ jātu nāsam* (2. 12) and ending with *ahaṃ tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ* (18. 66), embodies the Karmayoga, Jñānayoga, and Bhaktiyoga which are the means for obtaining the true nature of the *ātman* and the *paramātman*.[2]

Stanza six of the *Gadya*, the *dvayam*, would then be consistently interpreted:

> Performing Karmayoga, Jñānyoga, and Bhaktiyoga, giving up the fruit, etc. and giving up all desires and the experience of *kaivalya*,[3] I seek to obtain only Bhagavān,

[1] Based on the text edited by V. N. Apte, *Rāmānuja's Gītābhāṣya* (Anandasrama Sanskrit Series, Vol. XCII, Bombay, 1923). This and all following translations from the *Gītābhāṣya* are my own.

[2] *Gītābhāṣya*, 2. 10.

[3] *Sākṣarān* evidently refers to attaining enjoyment of the *ātman* (*akṣara*) through Bhaktiyoga; this is the stage just prior to meditation on the Supreme Ātman. Rāmānuja most frequently entitles this stage *kaivalya*.

an interpretation clearly inconsistent with the over-all tenor of the *Gadya*.

The next significant point is the *Gadya's* allusion to *Bhagavadgītā*, 7. 14. In his introduction to chapter vii of *Gītābhāṣya*, Rāmānuja says:

> Thus, in the seventh chapter is stated: the true nature of the essential nature of the Supreme Person Who is the object of meditation, the veiling of that (nature) due to *prakṛti*, the resorting to Bhagavān (*bhagavatprapattiḥ*) in order to terminate this veil, the various kinds of meditators, and the superiority of the Jñānin.

The meaning of '*tannivṛttaye bhagavatprapattiḥ*' is made clear in *śloka* 14:

> For this is My divine *guṇa*-composed *māyā*, hard to get past; those who resort (*prapadyante*) to Me alone, they cross over this *māyā*.

Rāmānuja comments:

> Those who resort to Me alone as refuge cross over My *guṇa*-composed *māyā*—having removed the *māyā*, they meditate on Me only.

In his introduction to the next *śloka* (7. 15) he uses the phrase *bhagavadupāsanāpādinīṃ bhagavatprapattim* ('the resorting to Bhagavān which causes one to arrive at meditation on Bhagavān'). In *Gītābhāṣya*, 7. 14, then, *śaraṇam prapadyante* connotes *prapatti*, and this is prior to and closely associated with meditation (*upāsana*). The commentary to *śloka* 16 clarifies further: 'Those

performing good deeds (*karman*), having sought Me as refuge, meditate[1] on Me alone.'

Performing *karman*, directing it to the Lord, is Karmayoga.[2] Thus, 'taking refuge' is an aspect of Karmayoga. *Śloka* 19, one which the *Gadya* quotes, adds another dimension to our understanding of *prapatti*:

> At the end of many births, the one who possesses knowledge resorts to Me; that great-souled one who thinks 'Vāsudeva is all' is hard to find.

Rāmānuja paraphrases:

> At the end of many births, that is, meritorious births, having become a man of knowledge thinking, 'I am of the one essence of being a *śeṣa* to Vāsudeva, and my actions, maintenance, and essential nature depend on Him—He is most supreme by His countless auspicious attributes'; then, he resorts to Me (*māṃ prapadyate*), that is, he meditates on Me (*māmupāste*), thinking, Vāsudeva alone is my highest goal and means (*prāpyaṃ prāpakaṃ ca*), whatsoever abides in the heart, He is all that to me.

The man who knows the truth about himself, that is, that he is one (*śeṣa*) whose sole reason for being is to serve the purposes of the Lord directs his meditation only toward that Lord. The emphasis here is on the mental attitude—the 'resort' is only with regard to

[1] For Rāmānuja, *bhaj* signifies the same as *upās* or *dhyai*.
[2] See *Gītābhāṣya*, 18. 57, end.

meditation; the 'resort' *is* meditation. Rāmānuja is emphasizing that all one's *effort* should be directed toward Bhagavān, since release comes only by His grace.

These conclusions are reinforced by several other comments in the *Gītābhāṣya*. In 14. 26 Rāmānuja says that the *guṇa-s* of *prakṛti* are surmounted by Bhaktiyoga (in 7. 14, he said they are surmounted by *bhagavatprapatti*). His commentary to 14. 27 sums up:

> What has been stated is this: since in the preceding, 'this is my divine *guṇa*-composed *māyā* hard to get past; those who resort to Me alone . . .' and following, resorting to Bhagavān is established as being the one means of surmounting the *guṇā-s* and of obtaining the *akṣara*, *aiśvarya*, or Bhagavān,[1] following that (resorting)—one-pointed resorting to Bhagavān is the one *upāya* for surmounting the *guṇa-s* and becoming Brahman following that.

We have indicated that Bhaktiyoga preceded by Karmayoga is the means of attaining the *akṣara*, *aiśvarya*, or Bhagavān. Rāmānuja is emphasizing the fact that, if one desires to achieve these ends, one must recognize that the Lord is the giver and must, therefore, direct one's Bhaktiyoga only toward Him. Rāmānuja's comment on 15. 11[2] introduces *prapatti* where there is not

[1] The three goals which may be gained by the practice of Bhaktiyoga.

[2] *Gītābhāṣya*, 15. 4 is also relevant; van Buitenen has given it sufficient attention, op. cit. (n. 23), p. 27.

the slightest reference to it in the text of the *Bhagavadgītā* in order to distinguish between the two kinds of yogin-s mentioned:

> Yogin-s, striving in Karmayoga, etc. preceded by resort to Me, with the inner organ purified by these, see him who, though dwelling in the *ātman*, that is, in the body, is dwelling in his own form, separate from the body, with the eye called *Yoga*. Even though striving, those whose *ātman* is unperfected, that is, those who are without resort to Me, those whose *manas* is not purified, those who are fools—they are without the *manas* fit for seeing the *ātman*; they do not see him.

Finally, in his paraphrase of *Bhagavadgītā*, 18. 62, Rāmānuja defines '*śaraṇaṃ gaccha*' as '*sarvātmanânuvartasva*' or 'pursue (follow, obey) with all of one's being.' There is no note here of the helplessness which characterizes the devotee of the *Gadya*.

The above survey of the sense in which Rāmānuja employs the idea of 'taking refuge' in his *Gītābhāṣya* is supported by his *Vedārthasaṃgraha* and *Śrībhāṣya*. *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, paragrah 78,[1] begins: 'Now this is the heart (central meaning) of all the scriptures.' Then, after stating the essential nature of the *jīvātman* and its bondage due to *karman*, it affirms:

> Release of these (individual souls) from *saṃsāra* is not accomplished by other than resort to the

[1] Van Buitenen, op. cit., p. 116; see also p. 237, n. 348.

> Lord (*bhagavatprapattim*); for this purpose, the scriptures establish the sameness of all these (souls) . . . the essential nature of the Lord . . . meditation on that (Lord), together with its auxiliaries, as the means to obtain Him.

It is clear from this that the means to release is meditation (*upāsana*). 'Resort to the Lord' (*bhagavatprapattim*) may mean either that meditation should have the Lord only as its object, or, that release is possible only by 'obtaining' the Lord.[1] A little further on,[2] Rāmānuja uses the same phrasing again—'*mokṣaḥ bhagavatprapattimantareṇa nopapadyate*'—and gives scriptural support. He says this is established in *Bhagavadgītā*, 7. 14, upon which we have already commented, and in *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, 3. 13. 1. The latter, which reads, 'Thus, he who knows (*vidvān*) That becomes immortal here—no other path is known by which to tread,' is a text that Rāmānuja quotes again and again to establish that release is due to *upāsana* or *bhakti*, which is the same as *vedana* (*vidvān*). In *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, paragraph 91[3] Rāmānuja speaks of

[1] It is of interest to note that two of the manuscripts, collated by van Buitenen, for *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, have different readings—one replacing *bhagavatprapattim* by *bhagavatpratipattim*, the other by *bhagavadprāptim*. These variations may simply be due to miscopying, but both terms give more precisely the meaning which Rāmānuja wished to convey. Both mean, 'the obtaining (gaining) of the Lord.'

[2] Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., p. 118.

[3] ibid., p. 126.

śaraṇāgati to the same effect as he has eariler employed *prapatti*.[1]

The *Śrībhāṣya* yields one reference to 'taking refuge.' In his commentary on *sūtra* 1. 4. 1, Rāmānuja seeks to refute the Sāṃkhyan interpretation of *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 3. 10-11. The *Kaṭha* text reads as follows:

> The objects are superior to the senses, the *manas* is superior to the objects, the *buddhi* is superior to the *manas*, the great *ātman* is superior to the *buddhi*, the unmanifested is superior to the great one, and the Person is superior to the unmanifested; nothing is superior to the Person; He is the ultimate, the supreme goal.

Rāmānuja says that the text is delineating the order in which the physical and mental must be controlled if one is to attain to the highest place of Viṣṇu.[2] He says:

> Higher even than that (the body) is the Highest Person who is the supreme, the passage way, the inner ruler, who is the inner *Ātman* of all—since the activity of all extending as far as the *ātman*, as stated, depends on the will of Him; He, by being the inner ruler of all, is also the perfector of *upāsana*;. . . He alone is the ultimate means for accomplishing the *upāsana* which is to be brought under control and is the

[1] Cited above.

[2] Viṣṇu, Bhagavān, Brahman, Nārāyaṇa, etc. are all names of the same Supreme Being.

> supreme object to be attained; . . . and the controlling of Him (the getting of His help) is only through taking refuge (*śaraṇāgatireva*) in Him.[1]

As his authority for this, he cites *Bhagavadgītā*, 18. 62. This passage makes Rāmānuja's view of *śaraṇāgati* eminently clear. *Upāsana* is the means to release. In order to accomplish this *upāsana*, one must get the help of the Supreme Person. His help is secured by pursuing or obeying Him with all one's being.

We have examined the content of the *Śaraṇāgatigadya* and the appropriate passages in Rāmānuja's established writings. It needs only to be said that there is a basic discrepancy between the two. If we interpret the *Bhagavadgītā* passages alluded to or quoted in the *Gadya*, in line with Rāmānuja's *Gītābhāṣya*, they would be in direct conflict with the over-all tenor of the *Gadya*. There are a few statements in the *Gadya* which lead us to believe that something besides a mere utterance of 'taking refuge' is necessary in order to gain the highest goal,[2] but the author finally makes it quite clear that, in fact, such an utterance is sufficient. Even if we

[1] My translation, based on the text, *Rāmānuja's Śrībhāsya*, ed. Vasudeva Sastri Abhyankar (Bombay: Nirnayasagara Press, 1915).

[2] In his *Tātparyacandrikā* on the *Gītābhāṣya* (Apte, op. cit.) Vedānta Deśika, at all relevant passages, notes only *aṅga-prapatti*. For example, see his comments on *Gītābhāṣya*, 18. 66. In his *Gadyabhāṣya* (op. cit., p. 2) he notes that Rāmānuja seems to speak of *prapatti* as auxiliary to *parabhakti*, etc. but then says that this cannot be since the scriptures speak of *prapatti* as the sole means. He concludes, therefore, that *parabhakti*, etc. must refer to the end stage rather than to the means.

could admit that something more is involved—that *śaraṇāgati* is here, in some sense, only auxiliary (*aṅga*) to *bhakti*, that in such a devotional outpouring there is bound to be exaggeration due to deep religious feeling—we cannot reconcile such 'māntric' *śaraṇāgati* with Rāmānuja's view. Rāmānuja neither considers the act of taking refuge as in itself qualifying one for supreme bliss, nor does he use derivatives of *prapad* and *śaraṇam ā-gam* with reference to a distinct act involving such utterance.

The *Śrīraṅgagadya* does not emphasize ritual, māntric *śaraṇāgati* but is even clearer than the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya*, that simple resort to the Lord is sufficient to salvation. Following a prayer to the Highest Person, the Supreme Brahman, Who takes His repose in Srirangam, asking that he might become His eternal servant (*nityakiṃkaraḥ*), the author petitions:

> Destitute of *bhakti*, which is the means to obtain eternal service, right knowledge which is the means to that (*bhakti*), right action which is the means to that (knowledge), and all spiritual qualities like goodness and faith conducive to that (action); sunk in the endless and hard-to-pass-over ocean of impressions of beginningless sins conducive to knowledge and action which are contrary to that (right knowledge and action); . . . seeing no other means; . . . I resort to your two lotus-like feet as refuge, O Nārāyaṇa, consort of Śrī. I pray . . . with the faith that, though being in such a state (as

> above), by merely asking, Bhagavān, Who is supremely merciful, will give eternal servitude. . . . Give me, by Thy compassion, O Lord, the servitude which arises from the love which is born of the experience of Thee; I do not know any other ways (sts. 2-4).[1]

Again, the highest goal is *nityakaiṃkarya.* The means to release which the devotee lacks is right action (*samīcīna-kriyā*), right knowledge (*samyagjñāna*), and *bhakti.*

The question of *śaraṇāgati* is not the only problem in reconciling *Śaraṇāgatigadya* and Rāmānuja's major writings. The *Gadya's* concept of Śrī, as mediatrix between the devotee and Nārāyaṇa, its description of the means to release aside from *śaraṇāgati* as *parabhakti parajñāna paramabhakti* and its concept of *nityakaiṃkarya* as the highest goal represent a clear evolution of theological concept beyond Rāmānuja's commentaries. Rāmānuja mentions Śrī[2] and does say enough about her to warrant the general description given in the *Gadya*;[3] but he nowhere indicates that she is to be the object of worship, much less that she is mediatrix between the devotee and Nārāyaṇa.

[1] Based on Annangaracharyar's ed., op. cit.

[2] *śriyaḥpatiḥ*—Apte, op. cit., 'Introduction,' *śrīnivāse*—Abhyankar, op. cit., the opening; these are most frequently employed appellations.

[3] *sva* (*nārāyaṇa*)*-abhimata-svānurūpa-svarūpa-guṇavibhavaiśvarya-śīlādyanavadhika-mahimamahiṣī* (van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., p. 157). '*svābhimatānurūpa-nityaniravadya-svarūparūpa-guṇavibhavaiśvarya-śīlādyanavadhikātiśayāsaṃkhyeya-kalyāṇaguṇa-śrīvallabhaḥ*' (Apte, loc. cit).

The phrase *parabhakti-parajñāna-paramabhakti*, employed seven times in the *Gadya* as a standardized formulation of the means to the highest goal, is explained only by the *Gadya's* reference to the *Bhagavadgītā*; Rāmānuja does not employ the phrase. He speaks of *parabhakti*:

> And the means to obtain Brahman has been stated to be only *parabhakti* which has the form of continuous meditation which has reached the state of vivid perception which is immeasurably and overwhelmingly dear, which is accomplished by firm adherence to *bhakti* supported by one's own *karman* based on knowledge of the real obtained from scripture (*Vedārthasaṃgraha*, para. 141).[1]
>
> The means of attaining Bhagavān is, in truth, only knowledge which has reached the form of *parabhakti* (para. 144).[2]
>
> With mind controlled, when one has direct vision of the individual *ātman* the essential nature of which is only as *śeṣa* to Me, all obstacles like *avidyā*, etc. being removed by meditation on the *ātman* which is effected by *karman* performed as worship of Me without attachment for the fruit, the higher *bhakti* toward Me is produced just of itself (it results naturally) (*Gītābhāṣya*, 12. 11).

[1] My translation, based on *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., p. 170.
[2] ibid., p. 173; see also *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 2. 23.

Thus, *parabhakti* arises from a vision of the individual soul (*ātman*) as distinct from *prakṛti* and as totally dependent on the Lord, and it is expressed through meditation on the Lord, which results in a vivid perception of Him, and in the meditation itself becoming as dear to the devotee as the object of meditation. We might therefore conjecture that *parajñāna* refers to 'vivid perception' and *paramabhakti* to the devotion which sees meditation to be as dear as its object; but this would be an unjustified extension of Rāmānuja. A Śrīvaiṣṇava scholar has suggested to me that there is *basis* for such an expression in Rāmānuja's *Gītābhāṣya*, 18. 55. The pertinent part of the text reads as follows: 'By *bhakti* he comes to know Me in very truth; having known Me in very truth, he enters into Me.'

Here, the Śrīvaiṣṇava scholar suggests, '*bhakti*' is *parabhakti*; 'to know Me in very truth' is *parajñāna*; and 'enters into Me' is—*paramabhakti*. While this is a possible interpretation, it nonetheless projects foreign phraseology upon Rāmānuja. We expect that the entire phrase, occurring so many times in the *Gadya* and as a formula, not only would occur several times in his other writings but would also be clearly defined. We may allow this is a terminological rather than theological discrepancy, but it is nonetheless important. Van Buitenen suggests that the expression under consideration is 'a restatement of the ascension *karman*, *jñāna*, *bhakti*, where *karman*, which is essentially *ārādhana* "propitiation" of God, combined with the knowledge of the natures of God, spirit and matter, gradually

culminates in the conscious and loving adoration of God.'[1] But this is easily ruled out by the fact that '*parabhakti*,' the first member of the *Gadya* expression is, for Rāmānuja, the result of *bhakti* and therefore cannot refer to any stage prior to *bhakti*.

The third innovation of the *Gadya* is its frequent use of the term *nityakaiṃkarya* with reference to the state of release—each time as a distinct step beyond the experience of Bhagavān (*bhagavadanubhava*). Rāmānuja speaks of the state of release only in terms of *bhagavadanubhava*:

> Release is to be understood only as experience of the Supreme Soul, the natural state of (individual souls) following the destruction of *avidyā*.[2]

Bhagavadanubhava is 'likeness to Brahman' (*brahmasamaṃ brahmānubhavaphalaṃ*[3]), 'equality of enjoyment (*bhogasāmya*[4]) with Brahman', 'consciousness of the same attributes as Brahman' (*brahmaṇā saha tadguṇānubhavaṃ*[5]). *Gītabhāṣya*, 9. 34 seems to be one source of inspiration for the author of the *Gadya*. Here Rāmānuja says: 'Be intent on worship of Me due to the boundless, absolute love which arises from the experience of Me.'

[1] Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., p. 32.

[2] My translation. *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 2. 12, p. 154; 4. 4. 22, p. 396.

[3] *Śrībhāṣya*, 1. 2. 23, p. 161; see also *Gītābhāṣya*, 14. 2; there are many instances.

[4] ibid., 4. 4. 21, p. 396; see also 1. 1. 1, p. 38, *paramaṃ sāmyam*.

[5] ibid., 4. 4. 4, p 389.

Performing such worship (*yajana*) is of the essence of *śeṣatva*.[1]

The activity of a complete *śeṣa* is called *yajana*,[2] but *yajana* is worship, not service, and such activity applies only to the state of bondage (*saṃsāra*). In his *Vedārthasaṃgraha* Rāmānuja does associate service with *śeṣatva*, devoting a lengthy section to establishing that service to the Supreme Soul is appropriate, on the ground that the individual soul is by essential nature *śeṣa* to the Supreme. This service (*sevā*, not *kaiṃkarya*), however, has the form of *bhakti* (*bhaktirūpā sevā*) and, again, applies only to the state of *saṃsāra*, not to the state of release.[3] The concept of eternal service in release is natural for the *Gadya* with its emphasis on complete reliance upon grace. By the same reasoning, it is not a logical extension of Rāmānuja. Even if it were, we would expect Rāmānuja to introduce the idea in his major treatises.

These conclusions are borne out by an examination of the commentaries to Nammāḻvar's *Tiruvāymoḻi*, the earliest of which are contemporary to Rāmānuja and the latest of which are contemporary to Pillai Lokacharya. The commentaries show that the notion of *prapatti* as *mokṣopāya* did not come into prominence until at least one hundred years later than Rāmānuja.

[1] The state of being a *śeṣa*; a *śeṣa* is 'that which exists solely for fulfilling the purposes of another.' See van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., p. 183.

[2] *Gītābhāṣya*, 9. 34.

[3] Van Buitenen, *Vedārthasaṃgraha*, op. cit., pp. 171-3.

Of the 4000 hymns of the Tamil *Nālāyira Divya Prabandham*, the 1102 of Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi* are considered to embody the essence of the Veda-s. Four commentaries are recognized as authoritative: the *Āṟāyirappadi* or 6000, attributed to Tirukkurukaippiran Pillan (b. 1062), a contemporary and disciple of Rāmānuja; the *Onbadināyirappadi* or 9000, attributed to Nanjiyar (b. 1062), a disciple of Bhattar; the *Irupattināḷāyirappadi* or 24,000, attributed to Periyavacchan Pillai (b. 1227), a disciple of Nampillai; and the *Idu Muppattārāyirappadi* or Idu 36,000, attributed to Vadakku Tiruvidhi Pillai (b. 1227), father of Lokacharya and a disciple of Nampillai. It appears that two writers worked on the 24,000, Periyavacchan Pillai completing what was begun by another author.

Each of the commentators brings his own philosophy to bear in interpreting the Āḻvār. If we draw on selected comments of the four where there is discussion of *mokṣopāya*, the difference of viewpoint between the early two and the later two will be quite obvious. In his opening hymn the Āḻvār says (*Tiruvāymoḻi*, 1. 1. 1)

> uyarvaṟa vuyarnalam uḍaiyavan yavanavan
> mayarvaṟa matinalam arulinan yavanavan
> ayarvarum amararkal atipati yavanavan
> tuyaraṟu cuṭaraṭi toḻuteḻu en maname.

> O my mind, rise after worshipping the supreme light that cuts through affliction,
> He who is lord of the immortals, who cuts through forgetfulness,

He who bestows good understanding which cuts through illusion,
He who possesses the highest goodness, par excellence!

The commentators focus on the phrase, *matinalam arulinān*, 'He bestows good understanding'. The 6000 says that the Āḻvār's experience of the Lord, '... produced boundless *bhakti*' (*niravadhika bhaktiyai uṇṭākkin*). The 9000 says the Lord bestows '... knowledge which has the form of *bhakti*' (*bhaktirūpajñāna*). Again, he says, using the exact phrasing of Rāmānuja, '... knowledge which has reached the form of *bhakti* (*bhakti-rūpāpanna-jñānam*).

The 24,000 commentator here follows suit: '*madi*' is *jñānam*; '*nalam*' is *bhakti*; the Lord bestows *bhakti-rūpāpanna-jñānam*. The 36,000 finds he must discuss the question:

> There are those who maintain that 'madinalam' means both *jñāna* and *bhakti*; however, Bhattar, saying that it means 'good knowledge' (nalamena madi), says that the Āḻvār speaks of knowledge which has the form of *bhakti*, similar to a plant which as it arises is strong even at the time it germinates. In the case of the Āḻvār's *bhakti*, the kind which develops by means of *karman* and *jñāna*, this *bhakti* (in the Āḻvār) was produced by the grace of God; later, his *bhakti* is the one that remains prior to *kaiṃkarya*[i.e. if this *bhakti* of the Āḻvār is like that which arises through *karman* and

jñāna then in the case of the Āḻvār, it must have been bestowed by grace without *karman* and *jñāna* on the Āḻvār's part].

Some people asked Embār, 'Is the Āḻvār a *prapanna* or is he a *bhaktiniṣṭha*?' He said, 'The Āḻvār is a *prapanna*; *bhakti* remains to him as long as he is embodied'. If you ask me, I say it is like ourselves—though we are already *prapanna-s*, we search for a living six months of a year[i.e. as *prapanna-s* we need nothing, yet we seek a living as if we didn't live by the grace of God; the commentator is saying that the *bhakti* of the Āḻvār is the result of grace, it is *sādhya-bhakti* as the result of his being a *prapanna*].

In their introductions to the second decade of the Āḻvār's hymns, the 6000, 9000 and 24,000 say that in the second ten the Āḻvār teaches '... Bhaktiyoga, following after renunciation (*vairāgya*) of everything except the Lord.' The 36,000 again speaks at length:

There are *mokṣaśāstra-s* which are concerned with *tattva* and those concerned with *upāsana*; in the first ten of the *Tiruvāymoḻi* the Āḻvār said all he wanted to say about *tattva*; in this ten is set forth all that it is necessary to say about *upāsana*. Tirumalai Āṇḍān, who was taught by Āḷavandār himself, maintained that this ten is concerned with *prapatti*; Rāmānuja (Emperumānār) also taught in that way at first, but after completion of the *bhāṣya*, he

taught that its object is *bhakti*. Later, Embār taught the same. Indeed, is it both *bhakti* and *prapatti*, alternatively? In 'mayarvara madinalam arulinān', it was knowledge that has the form of *bhakti* that he obtained. If the one is obtained, then the one teaching cannot be joined with the other; in this way the Āḻvār will become a party to deceit. 'Of one whose mind is purified by both' means *para-bhakti* will be born to one whose mind is purified by *karman* and *jñāna*. Therefore, the *bhakti* of the Āḻvār is born by the grace of God rather than produced by *karman* and *jñāna*. If you say that this *bhakti* indeed is the one enjoined by the Vedānta—then it must be replied that he obtained it by the grace of God as it depends on the reason given in the *Apaśūdrādhikaraṇa*. It is suitable that that which he obtained he taught to others.

Here the commentator recognizes that the Āḻvār speaks of *bhakti*, but following Rāmānuja's *bhāṣya* which disallows *bhaktirūpāpannajñānaṃ* to the Śūdra because the Śūdra is not qualified to undertake the necessary karmas, nor to gain the necessary knowledge, he holds that the Āḻvār must be a *prapanna* who has received *bhakti* by God's grace.

Passing over to the introduction to the fourth ten of the last one hundred (10. 4), we find the 6000 and 9000 still discussing *bhakti*. Referring back to the second and third tens of the first one hundred (1. 2

and 1. 3), they emphasize the easy accessibility of the Lord to Bhaktiyoga, which is both means (*upāya*) and end (*sādhya*). They note that the Āḻvār, fearing that his Lord will depart, is consoled by God who says, 'I will never separate Myself from you.'

The 24,000 commentator, however, who has earlier simply echoed the 6000 and 9000, now employs the terms and argument put by the 36,000:

> The Āḻvār, in grief by feeling separated from God, completely collapses; and God, desiring to avoid harm (to the Āḻvār), has said, 'I will not be separated from you'. When the Lord consoled him, he became strong and much pleased. Having realized that the *bhakti* (referred to in 1. 2 and 1. 3) is its own end (*svasādhya*) and having kept in mind all those qualities which contribute to the growth of *bhakti*, he now concludes, speaking of the *prapatti* as the basis of his fortune. In the first Tiruvāymoḻi, the phrase, 'mayarvara madinalam arulinān', speaks of *prapatti*. The Āḻvār's *bhakti* cannot be the *bhakti* enjoined by the Vedānta which results from *karman* and *jñāna*, since he is a Śūdra. In the place of them (*karman* and *jñāna*), there is the grace of God.

Thus, the Āḻvār's *bhakti* is *sādhyabhakti*; he is a *prapanna*. The intervening chapters of the commentary remain to be studied, but I tentatively conclude that this change of perspective in the 24,000 indicates more than one author.

The 36,000 commentator, here, at first simply repeats what he has said earlier about *bhakti* and *prapatti*.

> God is *upāsya*—when you say that then what we have here is *prapatti* and *sādhyabhakti*—*bhakti* is here as the *jīva's* enjoyment of that which is obtained.

He continues, sayng that where (in 1. 2 and 1. 3) the Āḻvār appears to speak of his *bhakti* as a means, this is due to the emotional stress of his experience of grace. He says that Rāmānuja also held that the Āḻvār speaks of *prapatti*, but—

> . . . after completing the *bhāṣya*, he (Rāmānuja) said that 'viduminmuṭṭam' (1. 2. 1) has *bhakti* as its object, saying that one should not reveal the secret means (*rahasyopāya*).

Thus, the 36,000's final attempt to reconcile apparent contradiction appeals to *rahasya*—he is saying Rāmānuja taught one thing but intended another. There is here no mention of the *Gadyatraya*.

There is much work yet to be done in these commentaries. That Vaiṣṇava understanding of *mokṣopāya* undergoes significant development between the time of Rāmānuja and Pillai Lokacharya, shifting emphasis from *bhakti* to *prapatti*, is quite clear. The early commentaries are consistent with Rāmānuja, saying nothing of a *Gadyatraya* and the later commentaries are consistent with Pillai Lokacharya.

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